POLYCENTRISM AND URBAN NETWORK CREATION POSSIBILITIES AND WEAKNESSES IN ZEMGALE

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The majority of the urban areas in Latvia are particularly small towns. They are not significant industrial or knowledge hubs or regional development centres, and this condition prompts the question, in what way they could develop. In accordance with the urban hierarchy approach, urban network creation and specialisation development could provide development of these towns.

This paper focuses on two aims. Firstly, to research the theoretical basis of polycentrism and the two concepts of polycentrism: the many-development centres concept and urban network concept. Secondly, to analyse urban network creation and development opportunities in the small towns of Zemgale.

The authors have collected theoretical cognitions on polycentrism concepts developed by different scientists. The authors have also analysed the smallest towns in Zemgale to gain perspective on the cooperation possibilities of these towns.

The following generally accepted scientific methods have been used for the development of the present paper: survey of scientific literature, methods of SWOT analysis, and pair analysis. The factors selected from the SWOT analysis are grouped according to the following criteria: socio-economic and financial factors, infrastructure factors, and political factors.

The theoreticians are united in the idea that the smaller a town is the straighter specialisation it needs for successful development. Hence, specialisation development provides cooperation and promotes urban networking. Cooperation between small towns in Zemgale was not observed at that time. There were several sporadic collaborative projects between towns but they were not characterised as a strong trend. On the contrary, these collaborative projects indicate that municipalities are interested in developing this opportunity and in the future, this cooperation may transform into full value urban networks. The article comprises 3 tables and 10 figures.

Key words: polycentrism concepts, urban network, Zemgale.

JEL classification: R11

Introduction

On a global scale, studies in the field of polycentric development are widely represented (Krugman, 1994; Batten, 1995; Duranton, 2003; Aguilera, 2004; Taubenbock, 2006; Veneri, 2010 etc.). Polycentrism is chiefly studied in relation to the issues of reduction of differences in the centre peripheries, centre overpopulation, and territorial cohesion. The origins of the concept of polycentrism go back to the regional policy concepts of Holland and Germany. Randstad ring in Holland and the region of Ruhr in Germany are considered the first but by far not the only “testing grounds” of the polycentrism concept. It should be added, however, that recently a number of Dutch scientists (Pessoa, 2009; OOr, 2009; Meijers, 2009) doubt and empirically prove that polycentrism per se does not solve the problems or regional differences. They speak about the hierarchy of cities and the need to find a specific solution for each level of hierarchy. Thus, for example, it is advised to develop interurban cooperation networks for the lowest levels of hierarchy.

The concept of polycentrism has been applied to a wide variety of spatial scales ranging from Europe to many countries, to regions, and cities. Primarily polycentrism refers to the plurality of centres in a certain area. A synthesis of the defining conditions of a polycentric urban region points, among others, the separation of cities and the size distribution of cities. Morphological characteristics as the size and spacing of cities are determining factors in establishing whether a particular area is polycentric or monocentric. Rather than considering the particular area is polycentric or monocentric, it is more appropriate to score an area on the scale ranging from (very) polycentric and (very) monocentric (Meijers et al., 2006).

Instead of considering an area dichotomously as monocentric or polycentric, polycentrism should be measured...
by scoring an area with a value ranging from fully monocentric to fully polycentric (Meijers et al., 2008). Italian researchers forwardly consider polycentrism also at a lower level than the regional, since, for instance, big urban systems are likely to be composed of several sub-centres (Vereni et al., 2010). They underline that the system is to be considered as polycentric if not only it is composed of several separate centres with a flat hierarchy but also if it is formed, for instance, by a big urban agglomeration, which is likely to be characterised by several sub-centres.

French scientists have highlighted two types of sub-centres: suburban subcentres, both large and near the city centre. With the centre, they constitute greater centres in which the proximity between housing and jobs is quite high. Outlying subcentres are to be found outside this centre. They are both further and smaller but well situated on main transport axes. Locally they favour a certain proximity to employment for the workers who live there but they remain very dependent on the suburban sub-centres (Aguilera et al., 2004). In the past year, polycentrism gained new approaches wherein the polycentrism idea transforms along lines that are more practical. Several researchers’ development from a polycentric urban region to an urban network can provide a more efficient regional growth.

Thus, David Batten (1995), a Dutch scientist, described urban network systems characteristics. An Urban Network evolves when two or more, previously independent cities, potentially complementary in function, strive to cooperate and achieve significant scope economies aided by reliable corridors of transport and communications infrastructure. Creative network cities place a higher priority on knowledge-based activities such as research education and the creative arts. The cooperative mechanisms may resemble those of inter-firm networks in the sense that each urban player stands to benefit from the synergies of interactive growth through reciprocity, knowledge exchange, and unexpected solutions (Batten, 1995).

A polycentric urban region can be characterised as a club network when cities with similar interests join forces to achieve some kind of common objective or have common interests. This co-operation then generates economies of scale through a more optimum use of the critical mass present in several cities together. On the contrary, polycentric urban regions resemble web networks when the individual cities perform different economic roles and host complementary urban facilities, activities, and residential and working environments. These economic activities are then spread over the cities in such a way that optimum use is made of the strengths and local comparative advantages of each city (Meijers, et al., 2008; Batten, 1995).

However, this approach had several problems in implementing in regions with an undeveloped road infrastructure. As a solution for this problem, P. Krugman (1994) in one of his articles forwards the idea of political concentration for the reduction of regional inequality. P. Krugman declares that political centralisation has effects on several levels. The business of the government is a substation source of employment. For instance, employment opportunities in Paris are larger than in Frankfurt in part simply because there are so many more people working for the government, or supplying nontrade services to those who work for the government.

Efficient transport infrastructure, typically a concentration of population and centralisation of the transport system,
reinforces one another: transport links point toward the core of the city because that is where the markets and suppliers are, and business concentration is all the greater because of the role of that city as a transport hub (Krugman, 1995).

In the frame of polycentric approach, cities are separated in the hierarchical chain, from international to local level centres. The classification of cities also gets a mention in the European Spatial planning documents. In the European Urban audit executive report (2007), all urban centres are divided into three levels. The authors show this division in Table 1. The aim of a presented typology is to provide better insight into urban development and serve as a basis for urban comparisons and, at the same time, show the possible European city hierarchy which may be applied to analyse these cities in the context of polycentrism. The previous hierarchy division shows the cities more in the polycentrism central place concept where, different level centres develop without networking relations and independent from each other. Nevertheless, in case with intraregional urban relations, enough developed centres incidence is out of the ordinary.

In this case, the principle shall be to implement a different approach to city networking. If a polycentric urban region wants to be competitive, it needs to evolve into an urban network. This draws an analogy between the networks between cities on the one hand and ‘club’-type and ‘web’-type economic networks on the other hand. Co-operation leads to horizontal synergy, which can possibly be achieved in club type networks, complementarily to a vertical synergy, which can possibly be achieved within web type networks.

In Latvia, the polycentrism concept has been extensively studied by Professor Roberts Kilis et al within the framework of the research project “Trends of Social and Economic Development of Latvian Cities” (Kilis et al., 2008). In this study though, attention is paid to the development centres of regional scale. In the case of Zemgale, the centres of regional importance mentioned are Dobele, Jelgava, and Jekabpils. As it can be evoked from the theory and as it will be seen in this article, there exists a range of small towns that are not and cannot be integrated in the total image of the polycentric development of Latvia due to the economics of these towns being insufficiently strong to create significant economic effect for the neighbouring territories. Establishing of the city cooperation networks may solve problems of these small towns but unfortunately, Latvia lacks research in this area. The novelty of this article is a specific study of the small towns of Latvia in the context of city network creation.

Considering the even wider application of the principle of polycentrism in the regional policies of European countries, a need arises to integrate a larger number of cities in this process, thus accelerating territorial cohesion. As the small towns require a particular approach that differs from the application of polycentrism for the development centres, it calls for a more detailed study of small towns and the socially economic effect the integration of these towns may render for the vision of polycentric development. The topicality of the study is further strengthened by the fact that there is a considerable number of small towns in Latvia that are located far from the development centres and are practically not included in the polycentric development. The situation is well presented.
in Figure 1 that shows the polycentric development vision, though without including small towns.

Despite wide usage, several scientists underline that theoretical foundations and economic implications of the term polycentrism are still unknown and the concept of polycentrism still does not have a shared definition, or a shared measurement method.

The object of this study is the small towns of Zemgale.

The aim of the study: to explore the development opportunities and problems as well as weak and strong points of the cooperation networks of the small towns in Zemgale region.

The tasks of this paper are as follows:
– to research the theoretical basis of polycentrism and two concepts of polycentrism: the many development centres concept and urban network concept;
– to analyse urban network creation and development opportunities in the small towns of Zemgale.

Materials and methods

The authors have studied and analysed literature in order to understand the concepts of polycentrism. While analysing urban network development opportunities in the towns of Zemgale, the authors have employed SWOT (Strenghts, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis and pair analysis methods. In order to understand the urban network creation practice in Zemgale, the authors collected information on the collaborative network projects between municipalities in Zemgale in the period of 2009 - 2010.

Results

Looking at the strong hierarchy between different urban areas and their different role, it becomes obvious, that the lowest level centres, or sub-centres have a very narrow opportunity for development. They need to seek specialisation sphere, since functional duplication reduces small towns’ competitiveness. As it is shown in the theoretical part, small towns can employ network creation opportunities for their successful development. Regional polycentric development based at the core of urban development is the regional policy priority of Latvia and the EU. It is assumed that this growth will promote development of the surrounding area. However, most of the urban areas of Latvia are particularly small towns, the territories of which do not often exceed five square kilometres. These small towns have a problem with integration in the polycentric regional system. As one of the opportunities for these towns may be the integration into urban network systems. As the next step, the authors offer to look at these small towns as potential urban network hubs.

The study proceeds with the analysis of districts in Zemgale region carried out by the authors. Further, the authors suggest considering the possibilities of a network-city creation in Zemgale. Therefore, the districts have been selected according to the three described criteria.

Administrative territorial division

According to the legislation of the Republic of Latvia, until the administrative territorial reform in 2009, urban areas

Source: authors’ construction based on the data of the State Regional Development Agency, 2009
were divided into the following groups: major cities, district towns, and towns of local importance within the boundaries of the administrative district. After the reform, district cities and local importance towns gained equal status but this did not erase the disparities between different urban formations. The authors are particularly interested in the towns, which are located within the district administrative boundaries; however, they are not district towns.

Population

The cities are divided into three prominent levels. The authors have a scientific interest in the lowest level, which corresponds to the following towns: Akniste, Jaunjelgava, Viesite, Plavinas, and Auce (Figure 2).

The area of urban territory, excluding the rural area

There are three noticeable levels of the area of urban territory. The authors, within the framework of this study, focus on the lowest hierarchical level towns, which are as follows: Viesite, Akniste, Auce, Jaunjelgava, Bauska, and Plavinas. The authors turn your attention to the conditions, in which the urban area of Plavinas is a little greater than in Bauska, while according to the earlier criteria, Bauska is in line with the level of Dobele and Aizkraukle (Figure 3).

Thus, in the aspect of urban network creation, the authors will analyse five small towns in Zemgale, which correspond to the lowest urban hierarchy level and they are Akniste, Viesite, Jaunjelgava, Auce, and Plavinas. Next, the authors offer to look at the municipality collaborative network development SWOT analysis. Speaking about the city as a local point of concentration of public wealth (Puga et al., 2003), it is necessary to determine the conditions that have a considerable impact on the day-to-day life and development of the city. The authors have therefore selected socio-economic, financial, infrastructure-related, and political conditions for the characterisation of the criteria that are singled out for the purposes of the SWOT analysis (Table 2).

In this way, it is possible to assess internal and external influence factors and their interactions of the urban collaborative network. To specify the potential possibility of the statement’s impact in the SWOT analysis, the authors have used a pair analysis method and the results are represented in the network charts.

The most significant strength is that it is easier to rise funding for collaborative projects and relatively small distances between cities (Auce is an exception). In its turn, the town’s authentic image is an important strength but it is not on principle for urban network creation. When the cities ally within a particular cooperation project or establish a network of cities as a special territorially administrative unit, the financial capacity of cities is increased, more current assets are obtained, and the opportunities for attraction of larger funds for the implementation of development projects expand. This is of special importance for the implementation of common infrastructure projects in road construction, or building a concert hall, sports facility or health care centre etc. on a regional (city network) scale. One of the strong points to mention is the fact that distances between the researched towns

Source: authors’ construction based on the data of the State Regional Development Agency, 2009

Figure 3. Urban area/km²

Source: authors’ construction based on the data of the State Regional Development Agency, 2009
Table 2. Base of SWOT analysis: factors, which have a considerable impact on urban networking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial factors</th>
<th>Political factors</th>
<th>Infrastructure factors</th>
<th>Socio-economic factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is easier to raise funds for collaborative projects</td>
<td>Municipalities have practical experience in development planning and development activities implementation</td>
<td>Relatively small distances between towns</td>
<td>The towns are similar in relation to their economic characteristics, historical and other aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of funding</td>
<td>Municipalities have accumulated the EU projects and implementation capacity</td>
<td>Municipalities have developed municipal objects infrastructure</td>
<td>Urban municipalities and dwellers cooperation experience in various cultural activities and joint projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prolongation of economic stagnation</td>
<td>Slow and inefficient decision-making</td>
<td>Roads are in very bad condition</td>
<td>Towns do not have widely recognisable brands, products etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Duplication of town’s functions</td>
<td>Label inadequate municipal infrastructure objects capacity</td>
<td>Lack of human capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunity to efficiently implement the good practices in all urban network</td>
<td>Worn out or even not reconstructed infrastructure objects</td>
<td>All the towns have quite similar offer, which make problems to develop area of specialisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunity to attract common specialists for municipality projects The opportunity to become leaders in the field of cooperation in Latvia</td>
<td>Major serious infrastructure objects (hospitals, higher education institutions) can remain outside of the network</td>
<td>Opportunity to get wider identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reluctance of municipalities to cooperate</td>
<td>Opportunity to create and use common infrastructure objects</td>
<td>Opportunity for each town to develop its area of specialisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organisational problems, inability to divide spheres of influence</td>
<td>Opportunity of developing and improving mutual road networks</td>
<td>Being a cooperation network to get opportunity for competitive advantages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imbalance of cooperation and competition approaches between municipalities</td>
<td></td>
<td>Passenger transportation inadequate capacity</td>
<td>The opportunities for more efficient reallocation of resources resulting in economy from scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient administrative resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited opportunities for cooperation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: authors’ construction

are comparatively short and the researched towns are located within the same geographical area. As the researched towns are rather similar, their close disposition should be seen as a good precondition for building cooperation. In the information society, an important role of facilitation of the development is that of the telecommunications infrastructure. Existence and quality functioning of such infrastructure is also one of the preconditions for maintaining the cooperation between towns. Furthermore, provision of the telecommunications infrastructure is closely related to the road infrastructure. In the researched towns, two and more electronic communication companies operate providing the end users (municipal authorities, companies, and households) with broadband Internet services with a data transmission speed of 30Mbit/s and more (Ministry of Transport, 2011). Good telecommunication facilities are an essential precondition for the management of the city network and intercity communication. Although from the standpoint of intercity communication, the authentic image and similar history of the towns is not among the most important preconditions for the creation of the city network,
Figure 4. The results of SWOT analysis for Strengths

Figure 5. The results of SWOT analysis for Weaknesses
it should be mentioned, however, that when speaking about the uniform image of the city network, especially with regard to the marketing of territories, this condition becomes very important. Since the city network is a joining of populated settlements in one city with its parts just being geographically placed separately from each other. Similarities of the urban environment and the culture and historical heritage can be used as the jointing element when working at the image of the city network and the marketing programme for the particular territory (Figure 4).

The most significant weaknesses as in Figure 5 are very bad roads and a lack of human capital, which prevents communication and urban network creation opportunities. Although the distances between the towns are rather short, traffic is considerably restricted by the poor quality of roads that significantly increases the time spent on travelling (Table 3). Frequently enough distances between the towns are very short, but the system of roads is so arranged that long detours should be taken to reach the destination. However, Auce, in its turn, is too far away from other small towns and it should be viewed in the context of another city network. Thus, distances between the towns are a strong point, while considering the actual situation it should be also seen as a problem. For instance, shorter path from Akniste to Auce

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Distance km</th>
<th>Travel time</th>
<th>The nearest road route codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jaunjelgava</td>
<td>Viesite</td>
<td>78 km</td>
<td>1 h 6 min 66</td>
<td>P 86 P 75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Akniste</td>
<td>86 km</td>
<td>1 h 42 min 102</td>
<td>P 86 P 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plavinas</td>
<td>49 km</td>
<td>43 min</td>
<td>P 87; A 6; E 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Auce</td>
<td>166 km</td>
<td>2 h 23 min 143</td>
<td>P 85; P 96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viesite</td>
<td>Akniste</td>
<td>29.3 km</td>
<td>1 h 27 min 87</td>
<td>P 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plavinas</td>
<td>51.7 km</td>
<td>50 min</td>
<td>P 57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Auce</td>
<td>224 km</td>
<td>3 h 10 min 190</td>
<td>P 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akniste</td>
<td>Plavinas</td>
<td>63.4 km</td>
<td>1 h 35 min 95</td>
<td>P 74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Auce</td>
<td>231 km</td>
<td>3 h 46 min 226</td>
<td>P 73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: authors’ construction based on the data of Google Earth

Source: data of the State Joint Stock Company “Latvian State Roads”

Figure 6. Condition map of the state roads in Latvia
occupies 336.6 km of which 27.8 km or 7% are in critical condition (Latvian State Roads, 2011). Nevertheless, the dissatisfactory condition of roads is not a local problem of the particular place, but rather refers to all roads of Latvia. The situation is well represented in Figure 6, where the roads in Latvia that are in good and very good condition are marked in bold black, but as it can be seen, the roads that join the towns indicated in the present study are considered comfortable enough only in separate and small sections. Concerning the shortage of human capital, it should be mentioned that homogeneous and comparable statistical data characterising the human capital of the researched towns are presently not available. If speaking about the work of local authorities, it can be seen that, in the majority of cases, town development plans and projects are prepared by external experts that might be the evidence of the insufficient specific knowledge of
the municipality employees. The number of sole traders and business companies per 1000 inhabitants is another indicator indirectly pointing to the lack of human capital; as such, a number would show the proportion of the active population. These data were surveyed by the State Regional Development Agency, as across the counties. Thus, in 2008, there were 12 undertakings and business companies per 1000 inhabitants on average. The smallest number of undertakings was in Auce County - 9.5/1000, while the largest number was in Jaunjelgava County - 14.3/1000 (SRDA research, 2009).

As it is illustrated in Figure 7, the most distinct opportunity is to get an economic effect from scale due to urban network creation.

Each of the researched towns has developed its own sector of specialisation, both historically and depending on its geographical location and natural resources. Intercity cooperation opportunities can be viewed on different levels that may be mutually complementary. Cooperation is possible between municipalities and municipal authorities, companies, and non-governmental organisations.

**Inter-municipal cooperation**

Some sporadic collaborative projects have been observed in the municipality’s public reports and accounts of the projects accomplished during the period of 2009-2010 (Reviews of implemented projects in Akniste, Auce, Jaunjelgava, Viesite, and Plavinas local municipalities, 2010). During the period of 2009-2010, there were a total of 68 different projects implemented or on the implementation stage in the municipalities of Akniste, Auce, Jaunjelgava, Viesite, and Plavinas. Fifty-four out of 68 projects are local ones (without cooperation), five projects are in cooperation with other municipalities of Latvia, and nine projects are in cooperation with municipalities in other countries. The research on the implementation of collaborative projects in Zemgale allows distinguishing two main trends, which are illustrated in Figure 8.

Figure 8 shows that cooperation projects in Viesite and Akniste are implemented more often than in other local municipalities; however, there are no reported collaborative projects in Plavinas and Jaunjelgava.

All local projects have been carried out in urban infrastructure reconstruction or in the construction scope. The collaborative projects, in turn, are being carried out in the education and culture, and social integration scope. This is clear, because such projects tend to achieve a better effect by involving wider communities. Currently operating Latvia – Lithuania Cross Border Cooperation Programme for the period of 2007-2013 plays an important part in the development of cooperation projects between municipalities.
in Zemgale. Within this programme, Akniste, Viesite, and Rokiskis (Lithuania) municipalities implement collaborative projects. These collaborative projects include cultural projects “The Selonians sing and dance together”, which takes place in one of the partner cities each year in the form of concerts and conferences in order to preserve and develop Selonian cultural heritage. As another bright cooperation example, the authors wish to mention a project called “Cross-border Network of Crafts as a Promoter of the Attractiveness of Latvia – Lithuania Borderlands”. The project’s leading partner is Zemgale Planning Region that organised the courses for wood crafters in Jelgava, in turn, the similar courses in Viesite have been provided by Viesite municipality. Crafters from Viesite, Zasa, and Vipe have been offered the opportunity to participate in the courses.

Cooperation opportunities for companies

Studying the areas of business of the five towns in relation to industrial manufacturing, one can notice an interesting division across sectors, which are common for several towns or where several towns participate in the same product manufacturing and sales chain.

A more detailed division across the manufacturing sectors is represented in Figure 9. As it can be seen, in each of the towns one or more wood-processing, forestry, or forest management companies operate, which makes one consider possible future cooperation of the sector’s companies by expanding the industry or searching for wider outlets. The same can be attributed to culture activities, plant, and seed production sector that may develop over time into a production cluster thus achieving the economy of scales. However, speaking of this type of cooperation, it should be stressed that it calls for the initiative of the entrepreneurs themselves and a high level of the company’s development.

Considering the threats that could hinder intercity cooperation, the most significant threat is the prolongation of economic stagnation, which prevents any project from being implemented (Figure 10). Consequences of the crisis manifest themselves as insufficient state support and high unemployment indicators, which, in general, interfere with the development of towns and business thereof.

Conclusions

– There are two types of polycentrism as spatial framework concepts. One of them is different growth centres approach, which emphasises the necessity to develop separate growth centres (larger cities) and urban network concept, which has a strong link with urban hierarchy approach.

– Urban hierarchy approach declares that every level of urban areas has a complex of development opportunities. On every lowest level, these opportunities tend to reduce. Since these cities are located on the lowest level of urban hierarchy, in accordance with the polycentric concept of
development, it is very essential for the cities to develop cooperation and to promote urban networking.

− An urban network ability to attract greater financial recourses is the strongest inside factor in the results of SWOT analysis. The EU fund raising practice demonstrates that projects with a wider territorial overlay have preference because they provide a convergence process on a larger scale. Thus, it is obvious that the urban network has greater opportunities to attract the EU funding recourses than in local cases.

− The most significant opportunity is to obtain economy from scale. Having created an urban network, this area gets a considerable quantity of inhabitants and wider urbanised territory; it could also diversify its development potential. These conditions provide an internal market effect and territory becomes more attractive for enterprisers and new human groups.

− Economic crisis and prolongation of stagnation are the strongest external threats. It is obvious that this global problem is impossible to resolve in local communities. Yet, dynamic monitoring of the crisis is one of the significant tasks for municipalities, since it allows finding the right moment for the initiation of development activities.

− The weak link of more peripheral territories is a shortage of human capital. Some solutions for human capital problems are different life-long education programme implementation, NGOs (non-governmental organisations) sector development, and increasing of human mobility. However, these activities could not resolve the demographic problem and aging of population.

− In the process of carrying out research into a described town’s cooperation experience, it is evident that cities cooperate with each other mostly within individual development projects and in-depth cooperation based on mutual economic integration is not perceived. However, different from other years, this practice became more widespread, also due to Latvian – Lithuanian cross border cooperation project in the period of 2009-2010.

− The building of a collaborative network between cities is still an insufficiently used approach; however, taking into account the numerical dominance of small towns in Latvia, the authors believe that this may be a promising direction of the town’s development and growth.

Bibliography


