

KATARZYNA ALICJA BIAŁOBRZESKA¹

Psychosocial Aspects of Seniors' Transport Exclusion: Selected Issues

ABSTRACT

Social exclusion is a multidimensional phenomenon extending beyond poverty, unemployment, access to various goods and services, but also covering the scope of breakdown of social ties and a sense of isolation as well as dependence on others. This phenomenon affects various social groups, but seniors experience the effects of social exclusion in a special way. This article aims to show how the transport-related social exclusion of seniors influences their psychosocial functioning. The problem of transport-related exclusion in Poland currently affects 13.8 million people living in municipalities where there is no organized public transport. The article tries to answer the question about the extent to which the surveyed seniors experience transportation disadvantage and how the limited access to public transport affects their psychosocial functioning. The obtained results quite clearly indicate that the elderly experience many effects of transport-related exclusion, which has an impact on the quality of their life. The communication exclusion limits their access to health care, which results in decreasing their health. Seniors experience exclusion due to difficult access to public transport, goods and services that affect their life quality. Research shows that seniors feel dependent on others. Restricting contacts with family and friends causes them to feel lonely.

Keywords:

social exclusion, transport exclusion, transport accessibility, transport exclusion of seniors, transport poverty

¹ Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Social Pedagogy and Educational Research Methodology, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Poland.

E-MAIL: katarzyna.bialobrzeska@uwm.edu.pl ORCID: 0000-0003-4105-2475

INTRODUCTION

Social exclusion is a multidimensional phenomenon involving poverty, unemployment, access to various goods and services, and the breakdown of social ties and a sense of isolation, which may even lead to a loss of identity (Golinowska & Broda-Wysocki, 2005, pp. 33–37). The discourse on the causes of social inequalities often refers to, among others, lack of material resources, lack of access to adequate education, unemployment, unavailability of health care, while the inaccessibility of transport is rarely mentioned. However, it is worth emphasizing that one of the important generators or consolidators of social exclusion is poor access to public transport, which makes it possible to benefit from dynamically developing labour markets, services, educational facilities, or health care institutions. Although transport exclusion is quite common, it is surprisingly often overlooked in discussions on the causes of social inequalities and ways of counteracting them. In contrast, transport exclusion as a type of social exclusion significantly impacts social life participation.

This paper aims to show how the transport exclusion of seniors affects their psychosocial functioning. In the context of analyses concerning the transport exclusion of seniors, two of its dimensions need to be highlighted: the spatial dimension and the social dimension. The spatial dimension refers to the area with no access to public transport. At this point, it should be emphasized that in Poland, transport exclusion currently affects 13.8 million people living in communes where no public transport is organized (Dulak & Jakubowski, 2018). The social dimension of transport exclusion concerns groups of people without access to this transport. These groups often include the elderly who, despite the depopulation of villages and small towns, rarely emigrate, which means that their quality of life is significantly affected by transport exclusion.

The implementation of the presented research objectives required formulating questions enabling multi-faceted identification of the subject of research. This paper will present the results of the research answering the following research questions:

1. To what extent do the surveyed seniors experience transport exclusion?
2. How does transport exclusion affect the psychosocial functioning of respondents?
3. What is the relationship between transport exclusion and the living situation of seniors?

The subject matter and the nature of the issues addressed required the adoption of a research strategy that would respect its multi-faceted nature. The starting point was to discover the opinions of the seniors surveyed. Traditional survey studies (Babbie, 2004, pp. 267–301) were used as the basic method to discover tendencies appearing in the studied areas and observe their changes depending on selected factors. An original research tool was developed for the study: a questionnaire survey addressed to seniors living in towns with low transport accessibility. An anonymous questionnaire survey was carried out in the period from October to December 2020. Questionnaires for seniors selected for the study were delivered and received by employees of non-governmental organizations acting in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship. These organizations are members of the Federation of Social Organizations of the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship.

Non-probabilistic random sampling was applied as a popular type of sampling often used in social research. This project concerned the selection of respondents living in villages in the Warmia and Mazury region affected by problems with access to public transport. Considering the nature of this sampling, special care was taken during the analysis of the obtained empirical material when generalizing the conclusions. The research carried out in villages of Warmia and Mazury involved 185 participants.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION – THE VARIETY OF APPROACHES AND INTERPRETATIONS OF THE PHENOMENON

Social exclusion is a conceptual category defining the form of social relations and relationships, thus becoming a concept reflected by representatives of various scientific disciplines, politicians and publicists.

The theoretical foundations of social exclusion can be found in the classical sociological theories presented in the works of M. Weber, referring to a kind of “social closure” of privileged groups, the works of E. Durkheim and R. Merton, highlighting issues related to integration and social cohesion, as well as in the works of T.H. Marshall, emphasizing the denial of civil, political and social rights concerning certain groups or individuals.

Moreover, although the foundations of the discourse related to social exclusion are embedded in classical sociology, the dynamism of the discourse on social exclusion has been made more dynamic by considering and examining it in a political sense, involving the approach of the authorities to the spread of new marginalized social groups due to growing poverty and unemployment. This

praxeological dimension of perceiving social exclusion resulted in emphasizing its multidimensionality. The interdisciplinary discourse on social exclusion in the last two decades has revealed this process's complexity and multi-faceted nature, contributing to the emergence of many definitions and interpretations of this phenomenon. Due to the abundance of interpretative approaches to social exclusion, attempts have also been made to build synthetic approaches in which the authors seek to group the main themes highlighted by the authors of each definition. One of these approaches has been presented in the European Union Poverty Programme (Andersen et al., 1994, pp. 10–11). That study highlighted that, in synthetic terms, it can be assumed that social exclusion is a dynamic process consisting of different stages and phases:

1. Often caused by a lack of resources;
2. Leading to situations of multidimensional deprivation with varying degrees of intensity;
3. Multidimensional;
4. With aspects reflected in monetary indicators, but also aspects that these indicators do not capture;
5. Characterized by deficits in participation (of varying degrees of intensity) in mainstream society and access to essential social systems (labour market, social security, education, medical care);
6. Potentially involving breaking ties with family and society;
7. Potentially causing a loss of the sense of identity and purpose in life;
8. Entailing the deprivation or non-exercise of social rights;
9. Containing the fixating factors and vicious circles that dominate the life cycle and can be passed on between generations.

Given the multidimensionality of the interdisciplinary discourse around social exclusion, this paper will focus on selected aspects that, in the author's opinion, seem to be particularly significant for the analyses undertaken in the presented text. One of the topics is to interpret exclusion through the prism of participation, or lack thereof, in different social life areas. It is assumed that participation is desirable and that, whatever it is, to participate in is positive. However, people may consciously choose not to participate in some activities because it is their choice and, in such cases, it is not possible to talk about social exclusion.

Participatory and distributive definitions can be distinguished by defining social exclusion through the criterion of participation or its absence.

The participatory approach emphasizes the involvement of individuals and groups in important spheres of social life, which is linked to the conviction that participation in these spheres of life is a natural activity in the context of the existing norms of social life at different stages of development. This approach identifies three important areas of social life: economic, political, and social (Jasińska-Kania & Łodziński, 2009, p. 9; Galor, 2012).

In contrast, the distributive approach highlights restricted/lack of access to socially important resources and services. In this view, the world of resources is defined in terms of access to the labour market (jobs and income from work), consumption, education system (schooling/studying), social security (social benefits), and health care (Nowak, 2012, p. 19).

Amid the multitude of concepts exploring the causes and mechanisms of social exclusion, those presented by H. Silver and R. Levitas deserve special attention (Silver, 1995; Levitas, 1998).

H. Silver analyses social exclusion in a multidimensional manner, combining it with the main currents of thought on society and the state. She treats exclusion as a phenomenon to be perceived and analysed through economic, sociological, cultural and political prisms. Analysing the cause of exclusion, she examines it with reference to three concept-paradigms:

- Solidarity: from the perspective of this paradigm, exclusion is based on the breaking of social bond between the individual and the society, defined by the author as social solidarity. In this approach, an individual is excluded when he or she stops participating in community life or is not involved in civic activities. Social exclusion is analysed in this perspective as the breakdown of social bonds between individuals and society, which has more of a cultural and moral dimension than an economic one;
- Specialization: in this paradigm, social exclusion is seen as a consequence of progressive differentiation in the social, economic, labour and distribution of different spheres of life, which considerably hinders the participation of individuals in social exchange. Social exclusion in this approach is identified with discrimination, as it implies restricted access of free and equal individuals and groups to social exchange and interaction, to relevant resources and activities. In this case, an individual is excluded when he or she does not participate in the social process of beneficial exchanges;
- Monopoly: in this paradigm, social exclusion is assumed to be the consequence of the emergence of group monopolies with exclusive access to various resources, from which they derive the benefits resulting from being part

of that group. The individual outside the privileged group is excluded due to the restriction of social and economic rights guaranteed only to dominant groups. In this context, exclusion gains a macro-structural context and is closely related to the relationship between groups participating and those deprived of participation in social life.

In turn, R. Levitas, in her reflections on the genesis of social exclusion, distinguished three concepts as to the causes of this phenomenon:

1. **Redistributive** – exclusion is considered a life situation in which the absence of resources limits an individual's participation in activities typical for the given community. The main factor of exclusion or risk of exclusion is income poverty (often associated with relatively defined poverty). Those excluded are mainly poor people.
2. **Reintegrative (social inclusion concept)** – in this approach, social exclusion is the consequence of remaining outside the sphere of livelihood generation, the labour market or in a situation of job loss. The excluded are mainly economically and professionally inactive people – mainly unemployed.
3. **Moralizing** – this approach refers to cultural analyses of the underclass. Following this concept, exclusion results directly from deficits in human behaviour, mainly from learned helplessness and dependence on welfare institutions, replicated and inherited by successive generations (Szarfenberg, 2006, pp. 46–48).

Social exclusion is a multidimensional phenomenon subject to an interdisciplinary analysis. Despite the multitude of approaches and interpretations of this phenomenon in the rich literature on the subject, it requires constant redefinition and reinterpretation. This need results from the dynamics of changes in the scope of social exclusion in the temporal and spatial perspective and the knowledge that stems from the complementary character of the research conducted by representatives of various scientific disciplines.

TRANSPORT EXCLUSION

Transport/communication exclusion is one of the social exclusion types. This exclusion should be interpreted as depriving the inhabitants of a given area of the

possibility of using public transport. Exclusion applies not only to access to roads but also to railways, pavements, or cycle paths.

This type of exclusion can be defined as the loss of individuals and groups' ability to establish connections to jobs or services in situations where they are essential for full participation in society (Beyazit, 2011). J. Elvy, defining and describing transport exclusion, suggests that it can occur when people cannot participate partially or fully in everyday activities in the community because of their insufficient mobility in their environment, although this "environment has been built on the assumption of high mobility" areas (Elvy, 2014).

In analysing the phenomenon of transport exclusion, it is important to refer to the concept of transport poverty described in the literature. Transport poverty is defined as reduced mobility resulting from the co-occurrence of various factors impairing an individual's transport and social mobility. Transport impairment factors most frequently mentioned include having no car, low accessibility of public transport, high ticket prices, and fear of becoming a victim of a crime while using transport and poor accessibility to information on timetables.

Transport poverty can lead to a significant or total reduction of, among others, access to goods, services, opportunities, social networks, social capital, which can often be the cause of social exclusion.

Transport exclusion has a different impact on people living in the affected areas. The current research results indicate that it is possible to identify several distinct social groups at the highest risk: the elderly, children and young people, single parents, disabled people, people without access to a car, and poor people (Elvy, 2014).

The key concepts in the discourse on transport exclusion include the notion of spatial accessibility, which is understood as the ease with which a particular form of activity can be reached from a location using a particular form of transport (Black & Conroy, 1977). Moreover, the statement that a location is accessible by using some form of transport implies that we are referring to transport accessibility of a given location.

Spatial accessibility – operationalized as transport accessibility – is one of the key parameters determining the attractiveness of particular places. This approach is an important element of living standards or a component of investment attractiveness (Komornicki et al., 2010, p. 131; Guzik et al., 2010, p. 134). Transport accessibility to education or health services becomes a determinant of opportunities (Pacione, 1989) and poor or non-existent accessibility is a key factor in social exclusion (Cass, Shove, & Urry, 2005; Farrington, 2007).

TRANSPORT EXCLUSION IN POLAND

Communication exclusion is a fairly common phenomenon in developing and highly developed countries, including the EU Member States. In Poland, this phenomenon affects a considerable number of people. As emphasized by M. Dulak and B. Jakubowski (2018), the communes in which no organized public collective transport exists in the form of a public utility are currently inhabited by 13.8 million people.

Although there has been a wide-ranging social and economic development in Poland, it is rarely noted that using the rapidly growing labour markets, educational, recreational and cultural facilities and health care institutions requires adequate transport accessibility. The absence of transport services or their limited number, together with an inadequate offer, leads to serious consequences for the inhabitants of smaller localities and the towns themselves. The Polish Academy of Sciences has reported that more than 20% of village units in Poland are deprived of any form of collective public transport, and many of the remaining villages are reached by only two buses a day.

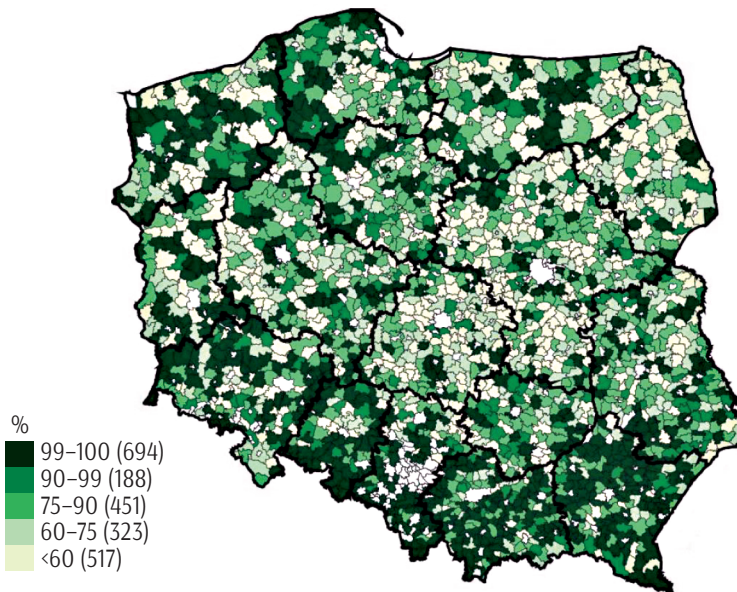


Figure 1. Percentage of villages in the municipality served by accessible and regular public transport

Source: Rosner, Stanny, & Komorowski (2018, p. 37).

One of the most significant effects of eliminating transport services is migration from smaller to larger localities, including from villages to urban areas. People who used to live in small localities have been forced to move to larger ones due to several difficulties, including limited or non-existent transport. A significant consequence is also the functional degradation of the district towns, even though they served for many years as the local centre to which the district inhabitants and those living in the neighbouring districts travelled using public transport. With the liquidation of connections between small localities and district towns, they have ceased to fulfil their former function. Lower transport accessibility has become a major constraint to development for many small towns. This is particularly important given that small towns should act as intermediaries for the transfer of development from larger centres to rural areas (Trammer, 2012, p. 2).

In analysing the spatial distribution of accessibility in public transport, it can be easily noted that the transport needs of regions and even local self-government units are diverse and do not follow the commonly used division into western and eastern Poland. In terms of transport accessibility, the distribution is not as simple as intuition would suggest. The following illustrations demonstrate the actual distribution based on the analysis of the transport accessibility index. The value of the index changes with distance from the main routes (especially railways). In individual transport, accessibility is gradually deteriorating, and the resulting problems are only seen in the remote periphery. In public transport, very low values of the indicator (which can be interpreted as the transport exclusion of all persons who do not have a car in their household) are sometimes recorded even near large towns. Thus, public transport generally provides better accessibility in eastern Poland than in western Poland, although the differences are often specific to the locality.

It should be emphasized that maintaining such access to public transport contributes to the deepening and consolidation of development differences in regions and differences in the standard and quality of life of Poles. It will also result in the transport exclusion of additional areas, especially those experiencing population outflow, affecting the demographic structure of rural areas and many smaller towns.

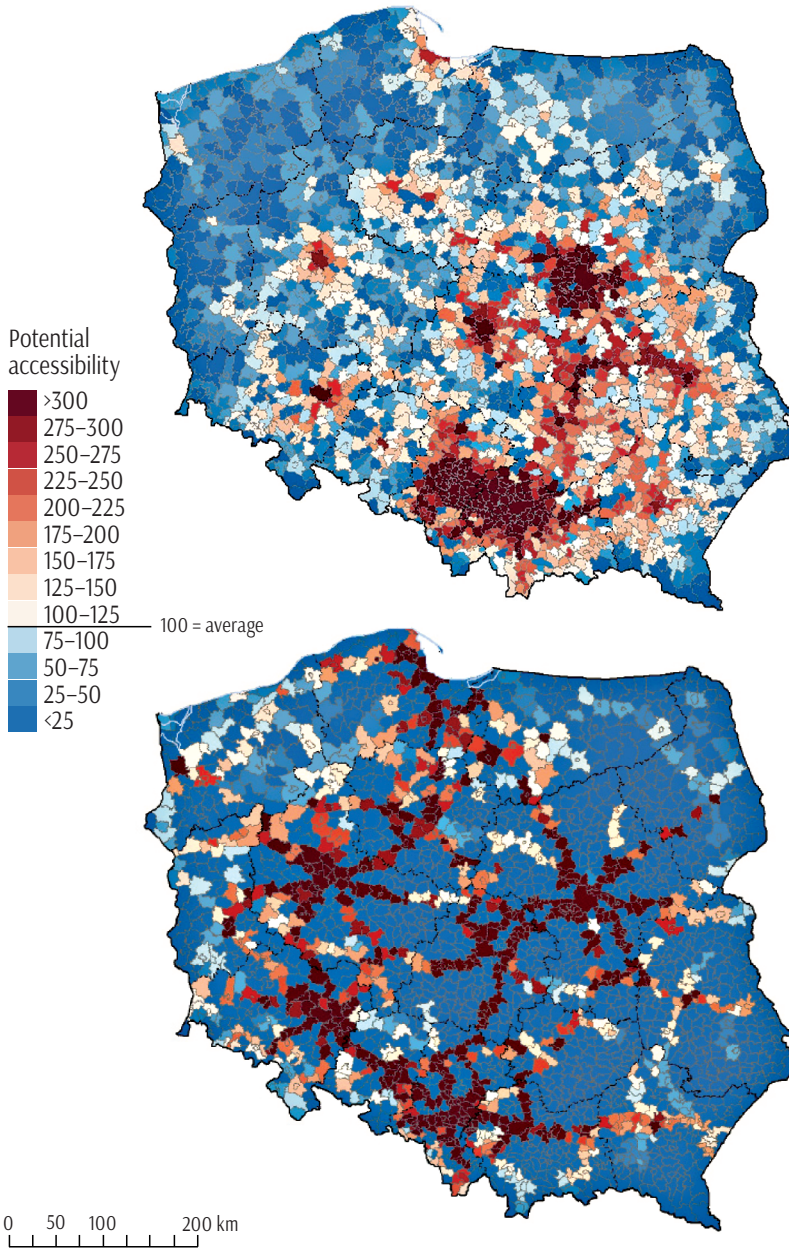


Figure 2. Public transport accessibility by bus (2015) / public transport accessibility by rail (2015)

Source: Rosik et al. (2017).

SPATIAL ACCESSIBILITY OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN THE WARMIA AND MAZURY REGION

The analysis of study results presented in the report titled *Analiza relacji funkcjonalno-przestrzennych między ośrodkami miejskimi i ich otoczeniem. Raport cząstkowy. Komponent 3. Relacje przestrzenne i dostępność komunikacyjna. Województwo warmińsko-mazurskie 2019* [The Analysis of Functional and Spatial Relations between Urban Centres and Their Surroundings. Interim Report. Component 3. Spatial Relations and Transport Accessibility. The Province of Warmia and Mazury 2019] shows that out of the total number of 2,736 analysed rural settlements in Warmia and Mazury, as many as 1,180 are not served by public transport. They are inhabited by 151,000 people, i.e., every fourth person living in rural areas. The majority of these are small rural villages with an average population of 130, located away from the national and provincial road system, some of which are still not reached by a road with a bituminous surface. This group also includes villages that are only served by railway connections, and the railway station is located out of the village and requires travelling on foot (Guzik et al., 2021, p. 43).

The average distance from a village with no public transport to the nearest bus stop is slightly more than 4 km, corresponding to a 63-minute walk to the bus stop. This is quite a long time, and it significantly reduces mobility, especially for older people, not to mention people with disabilities. It should be remembered that more than 1,200 villages have a connection that requires reaching another village or a stop located out of the given locality (Guzik et al., 2021, pp. 41–43).

RESULTS OF OWN RESEARCH

This study of psychosocial determinants of functioning of transport-excluded seniors in rural communities in Warmia and Mazury involved 185 people aged over 60. The majority of the respondents were women, who accounted for nearly 68% of the respondents. In analysing the type of household in which the respondents were living, a two-person household (living with a partner) was ranked first (40.7%). Almost one-third of the respondents live in a single-person household (31.9%), and 24.2% of seniors declared that they shared a household with their children and grandchildren. Just over 2% live with their family of birth – siblings or relatives.

THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SURVEYED SENIORS EXPERIENCE TRANSPORT EXCLUSION

The study results indicated that 44% of seniors live in villages where public transport connections have been discontinued. Limiting public transport service to two trips a day was reported by 18.7% of seniors and 6.6% of the respondents said public transport to their village was limited to one service per day. Based on the survey results, it can be claimed that nearly 70% of the respondents face problems related to access to public transport enabling them to leave and return to their place of residence.

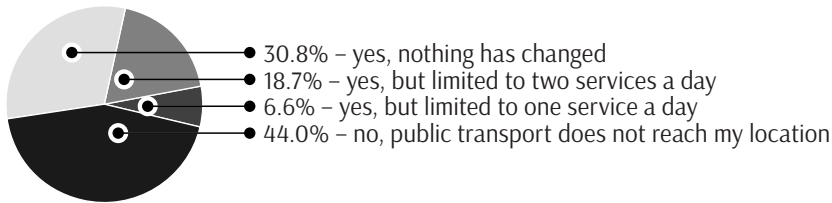


Figure 3. Existence of transport accessibility at the place of residence

Source: Author's own research.

The data illustrated in Figure 4 below show the temporal dimension of transport exclusion. The research results indicate that this phenomenon is dynamic and has been intensifying for a long time. Nearly 32% of seniors have experienced reduced access to public transport for more than five years. In the period between 2 and 5 years, another 22% of seniors were affected. About 26% more seniors were affected by restricted access to public transport for one to two years. Almost 20% of respondents declared that they had been experiencing this problem for several months.

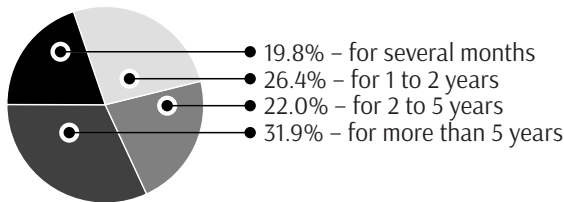


Figure 4. Duration of transport exclusion experienced by respondents

Source: Author's own research.

The data obtained from the surveys reveal the low mobility of senior citizens. Regarding the frequency of leaving the place of residence, it was found that almost a quarter of the respondents (24.2%) travel outside their village only several times

a year and almost 40% of the respondents leave the village several times a month. Almost a quarter of the elderly (24.2%) leave the village several times a week and 7.7% travel daily. The group of surveyed seniors is not homogeneous in terms of age. 56% of the research sample consists of seniors aged 60–69, 31% of them are between 70 and 80 years old, and seniors over 80 years old represent 13% of the respondents. A variable affecting the results obtained is the age of the respondents. The analysis of the survey results shows that significant changes in the mode of transport are observed among seniors aged over 80. Almost 42% of them leave their village only a few times a year and almost a quarter of the oldest seniors (25%) in the category Other wrote the answer *I never leave the village*. This category contained a small number of responses, such as: *I am transported in an ambulance, I am transported by a social welfare car*.

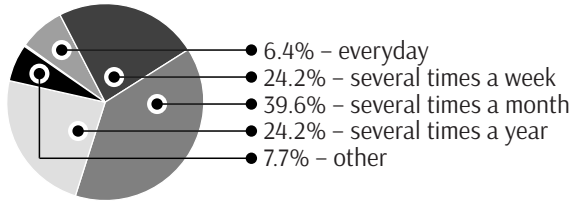


Figure 5. Frequency of trips

Source: Author’s own research.

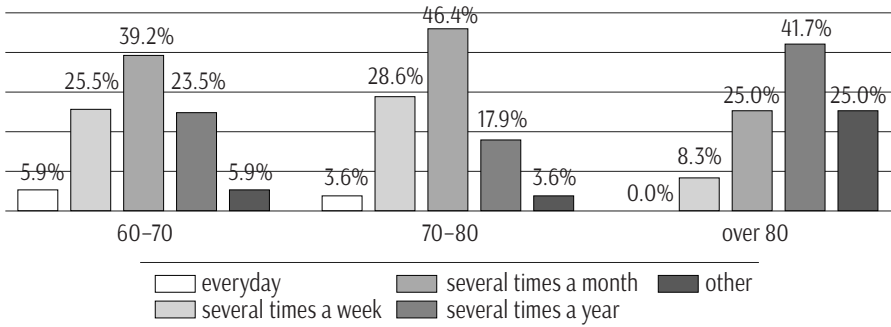


Figure 6. Frequency of trips and age

Source: Author’s own research.

The lower mobility of seniors compared to other age groups is probably determined by the fact that they do not have to commute to work or school, but it is undoubtedly very constraining in terms of access to other basic goods and services. Seniors who are communicatively excluded may find it increasingly difficult

to meet their basic needs as a result of the increasing separation of places of vital importance to them. The study revealed that there is no shop with basic products in almost 15% of the localities where the respondents live, in more than 20% of these localities there is no church, in 50% of the localities there are no integration places, i.e., clubs or community centres, and in more than 70% there is no healthcare centre. At this point, it should be added that administrative formalities, the use of a range of services, a broader shopping offer or cultural activities also require the use of transport.

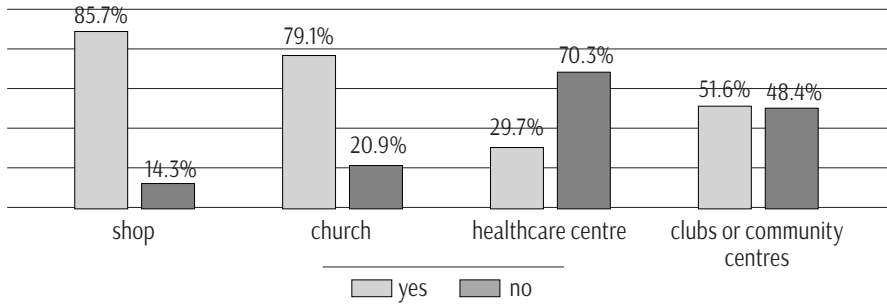


Figure 7. Access to basic services and places in the village

Source: Author's own research.

Without easily accessible transport, it is impossible to use public services to ensure an adequate standard of life. However, just getting to the bus stop often requires much effort and can pose a significant functional barrier to the social participation of seniors. Nearly half of the respondents (47.3%) have to cover a distance of over one kilometre to the nearest bus stop. This group includes 27.5% of older people who have to walk between one and three kilometres and just under 18% of seniors who have to walk between three and 10 kilometres to reach a bus stop. Among the respondents, there was a group of persons for whom the distance to the bus stop is more than 10 kilometres.

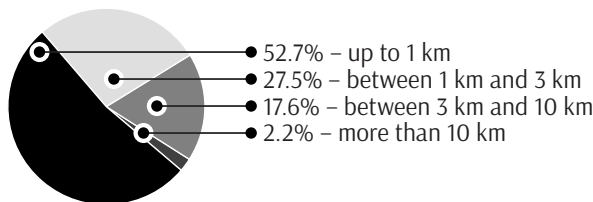


Figure 8. Distance to the nearest public transport stop

Source: Author's own research.

PSYCHOSOCIAL EFFECTS OF TRANSPORT EXCLUSION OF SENIORS

When analysing the various consequences of the **transport disadvantage** experienced on a daily basis by transport-excluded persons, it is worth mentioning the phenomenon of **forced car ownership**. This term was first applied by Banister (1994) with reference to transport-excluded rural areas. He described a situation where low-income families are in a way forced to buy and use a car because other transport options are not available and members of these families need the accessibility brought by owning a car (Banister, 1994). The obvious consequence of this phenomenon is a forced increase in the number of cars on the roads since, in the context of public transport liquidation, only individual transport makes it possible to get to the desired places. At the same time, the cars bought by those who are 'forced' to do so are usually obsolete vehicles, which increases air pollution; it is worth noting that Poland currently has the highest proportion of passenger cars on the roads in Europe that are more than 20 years old. People without a driving licence, the disabled or those who cannot afford a car are at risk of transport exclusion and reliance on motorised individuals. This group often includes seniors, who become highly dependent on third parties and rely on the goodwill of neighbours or other people.

The research shows that the older people who took part in the survey most often use transport provided by neighbours or family members (44%), while about a third of them use their own car (34.1%) and a further 11% use a taxi. The means of transport used by older people include bikes, used by almost 21% of the respondents, and scooters (5.5%), while 6.6% of the respondents declared that they travelled on foot.

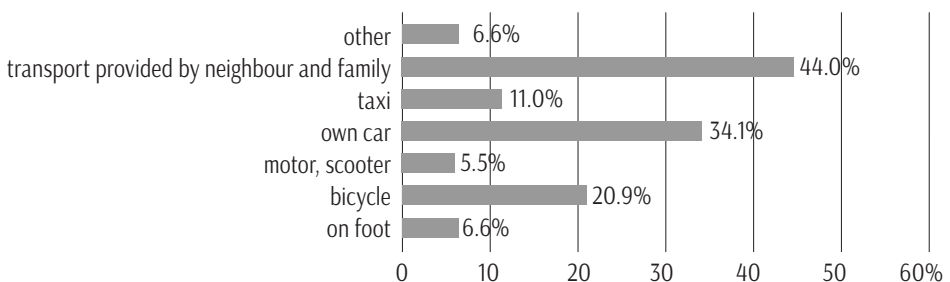


Figure 9. Means of transport used by seniors

Source: Author's own research.

Age is a variable that affects the use of different modes of transport by seniors (Figure 10). The change in preference in this respect concerns mainly the oldest respondents. People over 80 do not use a form of transport such as a taxi, and they

do not travel by scooter or on foot. Only a small number of older adults use their own car for transport purposes (8.3%), and less than 17% use bicycles. The vast majority (about 67%) is made up of seniors who use the services of motorised neighbours or family members.

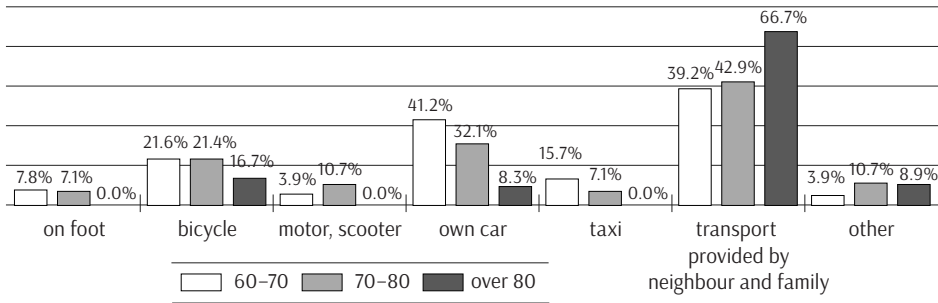


Figure 10. Means of transport used by seniors and age

Source: Author's own research.

Older people facing transport exclusion are becoming increasingly dependent on motorised transport for their mobility as they grow older. This situation forces them to ask neighbours or family to provide them with such a service and they feel dependent on third parties.

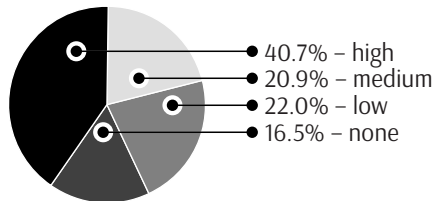


Figure 11. Seniors' sense of dependence on others

Source: Author's own research.

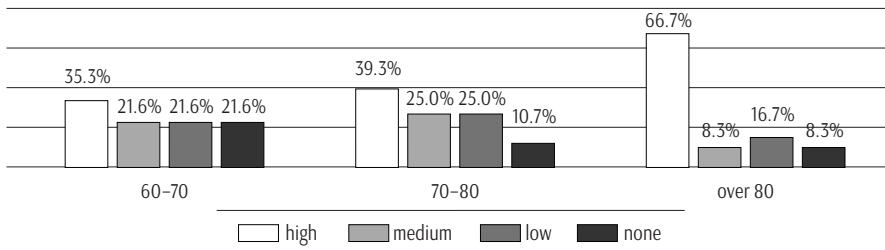


Figure 12. Seniors' sense of dependence on others and age of respondents

Source: Author's own research.

The results obtained indicate that senior citizens feel dependent on others – Figure 11. Such a feeling is declared by almost 85% of the respondents and only 16.5% do not experience such a feeling. More than 40% considers themselves highly dependent on others, 20.9% to be moderately dependent, and 22% to be dependent to a low degree. The sense of dependence on others increases with age, as shown in Figure 12. A high degree was indicated by 66.7% of seniors aged over 80, 39.3% of seniors aged 70–80, and 35.3% of those aged 60–70.

The situation of communicatively excluded seniors is difficult. Almost 65% of them reduce their doctor's appointments to the minimum, and 11% of the respondents avoid them and undergo treatment independently. Only less than a quarter (24.2%) go to the doctor whenever they need to.

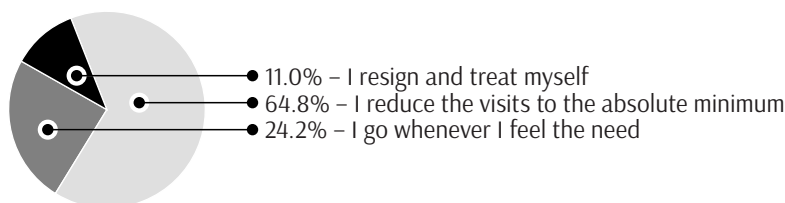


Figure 13. Medical visits

Source: Author's own research.

Restrictions on the ability to reach the doctor are associated with the frequent reduction of appointments to only essential visits, which often results in anxiety related to the lack of proper healthcare. The research found that more than 85% of the respondents felt a sense of threat to their life and health, with more than a quarter of respondents declaring that they felt threatened to a high degree. A medium degree was declared by 27.5%, and a low degree by 31.9% of seniors. With age, a high degree of feeling of threat to life and health intensifies. Interestingly, among the oldest seniors, the number of respondents who are only slightly concerned about their life and health is increasing (41.7%).

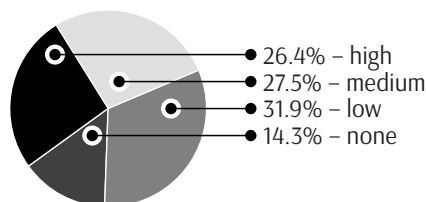


Figure 14. Feeling of threat to life and health

Source: Author's own research.

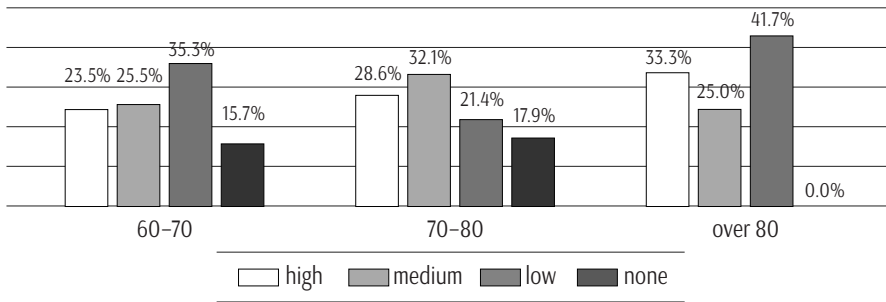


Figure 15. Feeling of threat to life and health and age of respondents

Source: Author's own research.

More than 60% of the respondents limit their trips for official matters only to the necessary ones, and nearly 18% refrain from such trips and arrange for official matters to be handled by someone else. Slightly more than 1/5 of the respondents visit public offices whenever they need to. The largest group of people who abandon handling administrative matters are seniors over 80 (75%). In contrast, in the other two age groups, nearly 67% of seniors limited their trips to public offices only to necessary cases.

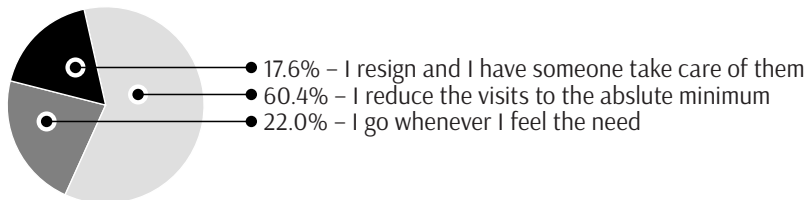


Figure 16. Visits to public offices

Source: Author's own research.



Figure 17. Visits to public offices and age

Source: Author's own research.

More than half of the respondents (about 55%), as shown in Figure 18, declare that they limit their trips to necessary shopping only, and 16% do not do it themselves and have it done by others. The largest group of people resigning from shopping are those aged over 80, accounting for 75%, and in the other two age groups, shopping restrictions affect nearly 60% of seniors.

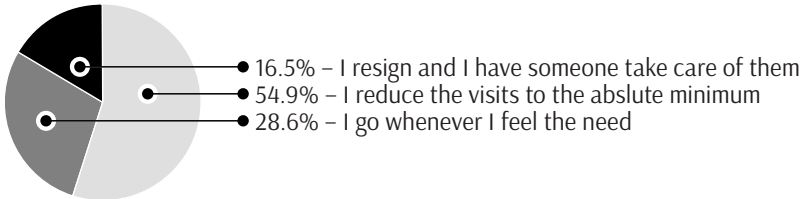


Figure 18. Trips for basic shopping

Source: Author’s own research.

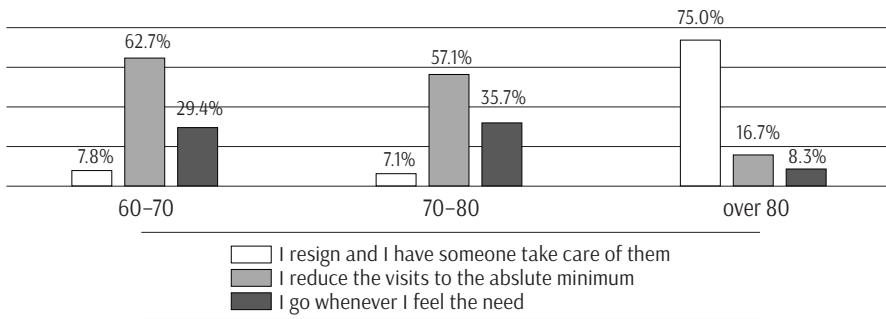


Figure 19. Trips for basic shopping and age

Source: Author’s own research.

An analysis of the trips of the respondents to use services such as hairdresser, beautician and restaurants (see Figure 20) shows that almost half of them limit such trips only to necessary trips and 1/5 resigned from them. Only less than 1/3 of the respondents use services whenever they feel the need. The number of people abandoning this type of services increases with age (Figure 21). The group aged 60–70 years accounted for 12% of them, the group aged 70–80 years for nearly 18%, and the group aged over 80 years accounted for nearly 67%. Not a single senior in the oldest group declared that they use these services whenever they feel the need.

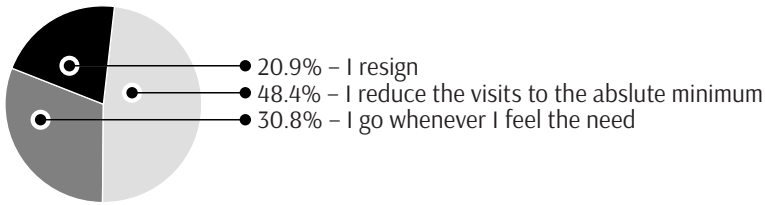


Figure 20. Trips to the hairdresser, beautician and restaurant

Source: Author's own research.

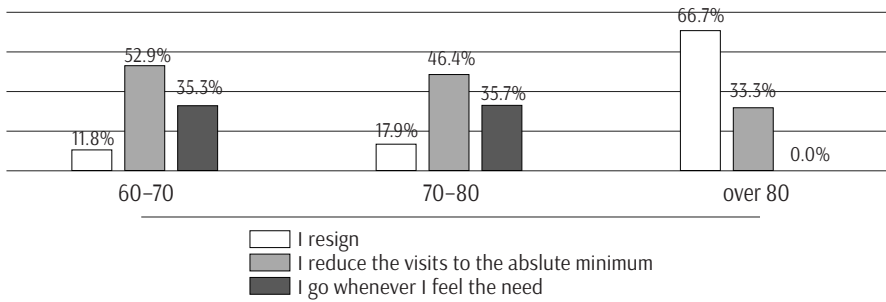


Figure 21. Trips to the hairdresser, beautician and restaurant and age

Source: Author's own research.

Nearly 70% of the respondents (Figure 22) declared that they do not go to cultural institutions, cinemas, theatres, community centres, and only less than 9% (8.8%) declared that they visit these places whenever they feel such a need. Nearly 92% of seniors in the fourth age group, 80+ (Figure 23), but also slightly more than 70% (70.6%) of seniors in the 60-70 age group and 57.1% of seniors in the 70-80 age group declared that they had abandoned their trips. None of the oldest seniors declared that they would travel when they felt the need to do so.

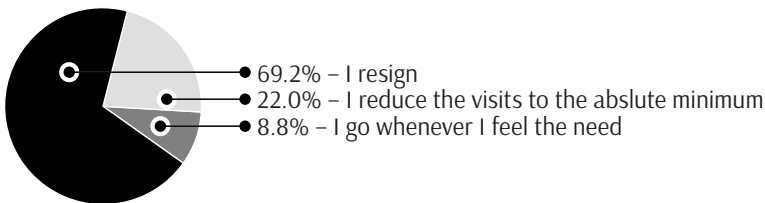


Figure 22. Trips to cultural institutions

Source: Author's own research.

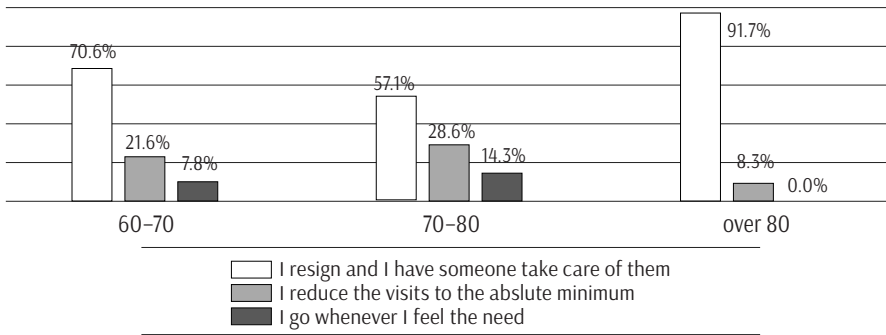


Figure 23. Trips to cultural institutions and age

Source: Author’s own research.

An analysis of **trips related to visiting** family and friends found that more than a quarter of the respondents indicated they had given up this activity, and nearly half only made necessary trips (47.3%). Only about a quarter of the respondents (27.5%) visited their family and friends whenever they felt the need to do so. The oldest seniors declared the highest level of resignation from visits (58.3%). Among seniors between 60 and 70 years of age, the most frequent declaration was limiting trips to only necessary ones.

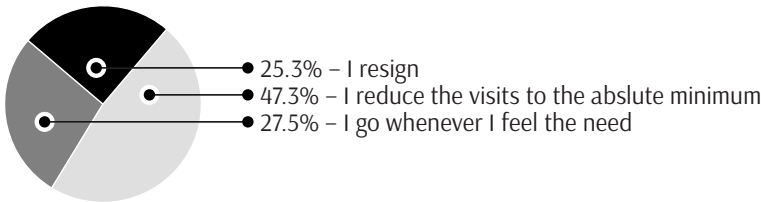


Figure 24. Trips to visit family and friends

Source: Author’s own research.

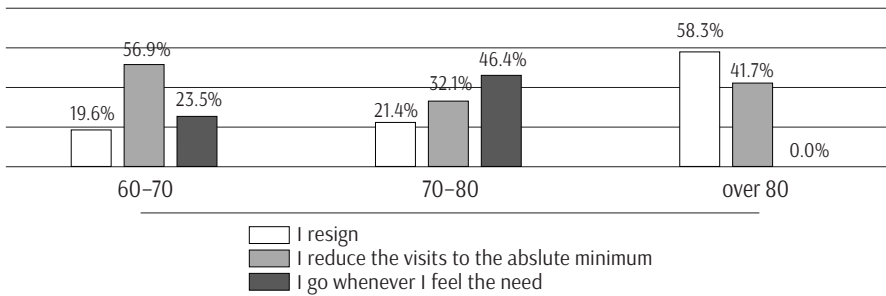


Figure 25. Trips to visit family, friends and age

Source: Author’s own research.

Limiting contact with family and friends living outside the village results in a feeling of loneliness. This is illustrated in Figure 26. About 85% of the respondents declare that they feel increasingly more lonely. More than a quarter declared a high degree of loneliness, 23.1% a medium degree and 35.2% a low degree of loneliness. Age is the category that significantly affected the feeling of loneliness among seniors (Figure 27). 50% of the oldest seniors declared a high level of loneliness, and the same level of loneliness was declared by 35.7% of seniors aged 70–80 and 19.6% of those aged 60–70. It is also worth highlighting that there was not a single senior citizen over 80 who did not feel lonely.

CONCLUSION

This paper presents preliminary research results on transport exclusion affecting seniors in the Warmia and Mazury region. Due to space constraints, a selection of research results was arbitrarily made and discussed to illustrate the psychosocial determinants of seniors' functioning in environments with low transport accessibility. Although it can be concluded that the situation of the region in terms of transport exclusion is comparable to other Polish regions, in view of the demographic ageing of the area (which is largely due to migration resulting in rural depopulation), transport exclusion of senior citizens is a phenomenon occurring in this region relatively more frequently than in numerous other regions of Poland. The situation of the elderly deprived of transport accessibility is particularly difficult as it often involves problems arising from the specific nature of this stage of life. Its characteristic features include singularisation, feminisation and double-ageing (an increase in the number of people over 80). These characteristics indicate that old age in the countryside typically involves a woman living to old age in a single-person household.

The results obtained quite explicitly demonstrate that older people experience numerous consequences of transport exclusion, affecting the quality of their life. Transport exclusion of senior citizens restricts their access to health services, which results in a decrease in the population's level of health and, in the case of those requiring regular medical attention, poses a real threat to their life. The research found that more than 85% of the respondents felt a sense of threat to their life and health, while more than a quarter of respondents declared that they felt highly threatened. Seniors experience social exclusion through reduced access to public transport and thus to goods and services with a real impact on their quality of life. Moreover, as they age, it becomes more challenging for them to cope with the resulting barriers. Few of them own a car, which makes their mobility dependent on others who use cars. The

research results indicate that seniors feel dependent on others, as this feeling was declared by almost 85% of the respondents. This situation strongly contributes to the withdrawal from various activities or contacts requiring transport accessibility. Seniors must largely rely on themselves. Restricted contacts with family and friends living outside the village lead to feelings of loneliness. About 85% of the respondents declared that they felt increasingly more lonely.

It seems important to address the issue of seniors as people who experience the multidimensional effects of transport exclusion without having the resources to overcome the resulting limitations. Although the transport exclusion of senior citizens concerns a growing demographic group, it remains an under-researched problem.

References

- Andersen, J., Bruto da Costa, A., Chigot, C., Duffy, K., Mancho, S., & Mernagh, M. (1994). The Contribution of Poverty 3 to the Understanding of Poverty, Exclusion and Integration. In: *Poverty 3: The Lessons of the Poverty 3 Programme*. Lille: European Economic Interest Group, Animation and Research.
- Babbie, E. (2004). *Badania społeczne w praktyce*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo PWN.
- Banister, D. (1994). Equity and Acceptability Questions in Internalising the Social Costs of Transport. In: ECMT/OECD, *Internalising the Social Costs of Transport* (pp. 153–175). Paris: OECD.
- Bayazit, E. (2011). Evaluating Social Justice in Transport: Lessons to Be Learned from the Capability Approach. *Transport Reviews*, 31(1), 117–134. DOI: 10.1080/01441647.2010.504900.
- Black, J., & Conroy, M. (1977). Accessibility Measures and the Social Evaluation of Urban Structure. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 9(9), 1012–1031. DOI: 10.1068/a091013.
- Cass, N., Shove, E., & Urry, J. (2005). Social Exclusion, Mobility and Access. *Sociological Review*, 53(3), 539–555. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-954X.2005.00565.x.
- Dulak, M., & Jakubowski, B. (2018, April 17). *Publiczny transport zbiorowy w Polsce. Studium upadku*. Retrieved from: <https://klubjagiellonski.pl/2018/04/17/publiczny-transport-zbiorowy-w-polsce-studium-upadku/>.
- Elvy, J. (2014). Public Participation in Transport Planning amongst the Socially Excluded: An Analysis of 3rd Generation Local Transport Plans. *Case Studies on Transport Policy*, 2(2), 41–49. DOI: 10.1016/j.cstp.2014.06.004.
- Eurostat (n.d.). Retrieved January 16, 2019 from: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained>.
- Farrington, J.H. (2007). The New Narrative of Accessibility: Its Potential Contribution to Discourses in (Transport) Geography. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 15(5), 319–330. DOI: 10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2006.11.007.
- Galor, Z. (2012). O dialektyce wykluczenia i marginalizacji. In: Z. Galor, & B. Goryńska-Bittner (Eds.), *Nieobecność społeczna. W poszukiwaniu sensów i znaczeń* (pp. 28–37). Poznań: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Nauk Humanistycznych i Dziennikarstwa.

- Golinowska, S., & Broda-Wysocki, B. (2005). Kategorie ubóstwa i wykluczenia społecznego. Przegląd ujęć. In: S. Golinowska, E. Tarkowska, & I. Topińska (Eds.), *Ubóstwo i wykluczenie społeczne. Badania. Metody. Wyniki* (pp. 17–54). Warszawa: IPISS.
- Guzik R., Kołoś, A., Fiedeń, Ł., & Kocaj, A. (2021). *Dostępność komunikacyjna i relacje przestrzenne w województwie warmińsko-mazurskim*. Kraków: Instytut Geografii i Gospodarki Przestrzennej UJ.
- Guzik, R., Zborowski, A., Kołoś, A., Micek, G., Gwosdz, K., Trzepacz, P., Chaberko, T., Kretowicz, P., Ciechowski, M., Dej, M., & Grad, N. (2010). Dostępność komunikacyjna oraz delimitacja obszarów funkcjonalnych. In: B. Domański, & A. Noworól, *Małopolskie miasta – funkcje, potencjał i trendy rozwojowe* (pp. 88–134). Kraków: Małopolskie Obserwatorium Polityki Rozwoju.
- Jasińska-Kania, A., & Łodziński, S. (2009). Wprowadzenie. Obszary i formy wykluczania etnicznego w Polsce. Koncepcje teoretyczne i badania empiryczne. In: A. Jasińska-Kania, & S. Łodziński (Eds.), *Obszary i formy wykluczenia etnicznego w Polsce. Mniejszości narodowe, imigranci, uchodźcy* (pp. 7–38). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar.
- Komornicki, T., Bański, J., Śleszyński, P., Rosik, P., Świątek, D., Czapiewski, K., Bednarek-Szczepeńska, M., Stępiak, M., Mazur, M., Wiśniewski, R., & Solon, B. (2010). *Ocena wpływu inwestycji infrastruktury transportowej realizowanych w ramach polityki spójności na wzrost konkurencyjności regionów (w ramach ewaluacji ex post NPR 2004–2006)*. Warszawa: Ministerstwo Rozwoju Regionalnego.
- Levitas, R. (1998). *The Inclusive Society? Social Exclusion and New Labour*. London: Macmillan.
- Nowak, A. (2012). *Zagrożenie wykluczeniem społecznym kobiet niepełnosprawnych*. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego.
- Pacione, M. (1989). Access to Urban Services – the Case of Secondary Schools in Glasgow. *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 105(1), 12–18. DOI: 10.1080/00369228918736746.
- Rosik, P., Pomianowski, W., Goliszek, S., Stępiak, M., Kowalczyk, K., Guzik, R., Kołoś, A., & Komornicki, T. (2017). Multimodalna dostępność transportem publicznym w Polsce. *Prace Geograficzne*, 258. Warszawa: IGiPZ PAN.
- Rosner, A., Stanny, M., & Komorowski, Ł. (2018). *Monitoring rozwoju obszarów wiejskich. Etap III. Struktury społeczno-gospodarcze, ich przestrzenne zróżnicowanie i dynamika* [Rural Development Monitoring. Stage III. Socio-Economic Structures, Their Spatial Diversification and Dynamics]. Warszawa: Fundacja Europejski Fundusz Rozwoju Wsi Polskiej, Instytut Rozwoju Wsi i Rolnictwa PAN [The European Fund for the Development of Polish Villages Foundation, the Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development of the Polish Academy of Sciences].
- Silver, H. (1995). Reconceptualizing Social Disadvantage: Three Paradigms of Social Exclusion. In: G. Rogers, Ch. Gore, & J.B. Figueiredo (Eds.), *Social Exclusion: Rhetoric, Reality, Responses* (pp. 57–80). Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies, International Labour Organization.
- Szarfenberg, R. (2006). *Marginalizacja i wykluczenie społeczne*. Wykłady. Warszawa: Instytut Polityki Społecznej Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego. Retrieved from: http://www.owes.info.pl/biblioteka/wyklad_wykluczenie_spoleczne.pdf.
- Trammer, K. (2012, March 29). Dostępność komunikacyjna i mobilność w polskich regionach. *Infos*, 6, 1–4.