SECOND HOME OWNERS IN TYPICAL RURAL AREA
THE CASE OF DZĒRBENE, LATVIA

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INTRODUCTION

Dzērbene is a parish with 15% decrease in population since 2007, which is located 110 kilometers from the capital of Latvia – Riga. Latvia is a typical post-socialistic country with monocentric settlement structure. That means there is one main center which provides working and studying places and other services for Latvians. So as a result Riga and it’s metropolitan area are attracting people from the peripheries of Latvia, also Dzērbene parish. So this centralization process has consequences – population decline and many abandoned houses. This kind of escapism towards economic opportunities has created a specific social group – people who are mainly living near their working and study places, but who are keeping their homes in a rural area – typical rural area second-home-owners (SHOs). This group of people is not homogeneous. They might have different motives for being here, different frequency of visiting their SH’s and different involvement patterns in local social community between SHOs and government/local residents. That’s why SHOs need to be researched with available quantitative and qualitative data to define them as a group that can be beneficial economically to the local government and also socially favorable to extend their interaction with local residents.

The main aim of this work is to map and describe typical SHOs in Dzērbene parish.

Tasks of this course work are to:
- Study previous researches made about SHOs, their characteristics and relationship with local residents and government;
- Gather secondary data about case area based on settlement patterns;
- Locate and map SHOs in Dzērbene parish;
- Make a typical rural SHOs profile in Dzērbene parish;
- Define interaction between SHOs and local residents and government in Dzērbene parish.

Course work contains 33 pages, 13 figures (5 of them as maps) and 1 table.
1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Interpretation of SH phenomenon varies depending on cultural, economic and geographical characteristics of countries and particular regions: in some countries ownership of SH could be predominantly considered to be attribute of elite and status symbol while in other examples SH phenomenon experienced intensive democratization process and could not be seen as an exclusively elitist property.

Increase in number of second-homes is mainly associated with building of new second-homes and converting of homes that were originally built as places of main residence. Converted second homes denote that permanent residents left them due to migration or other reasons and consequently it has to be converted to place of temporary residence (Kauppila, P., 2010: 164). Converted and newly built second homes are distributed between different geographical areas. Newly built second homes could be found in near zone of cities, rural areas with high amenity and close to resorts while converted houses predominantly are distributed in “ordinary” rural areas and peripheries (Kauppila, P., 2010: 165).

Space-time dimension is essential in regard to second homes as it determines how often second home is visited and for how long the stay in recreational house lasts. Thus there is correlation between distance and numbers of visits made to vacation house. Kauppila (2010) refers to model proposed by Mercer, which determines day trip zone as limited by 60-70 km, weekend zone as limited by 400 km and vacation zone exceeds limit of 400 km. Pallot and Nefedova (2013) while describing distances to second homes from Russian metropolitan areas, emphasize that despite the fact that periphery areas have different socio-economic characteristics in comparison with outskirts of cities (unsatisfactory quality of roads and poor services), they also attract potential second-home owners due to cheaper land price and bigger number of land available for purchasing.

Relationships between second-home owners and local population in rural areas could be seen from the perspective of “contested space”, which implies that space is shared by two respective groups, but at the same time views on future development of area differ between these groups (Overvag, K., Berg, N., 2011: 417). Contradictions between these two groups might appear because locals might consider SHO as a threat to already established way of life and expect that they might “destroy” rural atmosphere. For instance, local populace might be unsatisfied by increased number of temporal residents in the busiest time of the season as it might be followed by high traffic on the roads, noise and other undesirable consequences for “rural
idyll”. On the other hand, conservatism on development in rural areas could be expressed by second-home owners because they consider their property as a place for mainly recreational purpose and would oppose development which could threaten their understanding of rural “harmony”. However, mentioned above contradictions between rural and temporary residents could be also understood as “the dichotomy between change and conservation” (Ankre, R, 2007: 51). K. Overvag and N.G. Berg believe that most of the conflicts between two groups arise because rural and temporary residents share the same space but purposes assigned for using this space differ.

Confictual character of relationships between locals and temporary residents could also be connected to the discrepancies in social and economic statuses and possible negative impacts second-home phenomenon might have for rural dwellers, for instance increasing of property value affects property tax that should be paid also by permanent residents (Overvag, K., Berg, N.G., 2011: 420). Another negative impact associated with SH phenomenon in rural areas is connected with increase of property and rent prices which become too high for local level of income. For instance, in Britain SH phenomenon in remote areas, intensive migration of elderly in case of strict planning conditions was followed by the appearance of the highest rates of housing prices compared to local wages (Paris, C., 2009: 297). Besides that rural housing conflicts in desirable areas are frequently associated with disparity between high demand and poor market offer of housing that followed by ideas of refusal of intensive building and pronounced as “what the countryside is for” (Gallent, N., 2014: 177). Mentioned above negative impacts and contestations could be generalized in “loss of community” thesis implying transformation of local communities under the influence of “newcomers” and “outsiders”.

However it is also important to emphasize potential beneficial impact of SHO presence in rural areas, associated not only with consumption of local services and monetary resources but also with social resources including important social networks and social capital (Rye, J.F., 2011: 265). Furthermore N. Gallent (2014) states that social value of SHO for rural development has been underestimated.

Although rural space frequently seen as “contested” and implying potential conflicts between residents, it is important to emphasize that in countries and municipalities where there is no competition between locals and temporary residents for the same recourses, probability of conflicts predicted to be lower (Rye, J.F., 2011) Furthermore absence of significant socio-economic discrepancies between local dwellers and temporary residents also might be a factor
diminishing conflictual character between two groups. “Newly built and high cost second home complexes, owned by upper class urbanites, generate quite different responses in the rural locality than a limited and sparsely distributed number of traditional, Spartan second homes primarily owned and used by other locals.” (Rye, J.F., 2011) In addition understanding of relationships between locals and second home owners as a “contested space” and a dichotomy could be criticized also because locals do not compose one homogeneous group with similar interests and socio-economic characteristics (Paris, C., 2009: 297).

Although spending time and having a SH nowadays is frequently associated with mobility and modern mobile lifestyle due to necessity to commute between place of main and temporary residences, SH also implies for many people meaning of stillness, rootedness and continuity (Lagerqvist, M., 2013: 98). Feeling of rootedness or having connections to the past is valuable for some of second-home owners, this in turn also expressed in appreciation of archaic appearance of second homes. Additionally, people might change places of permanent residence but they are not so keen to change vacation home: “this is kept throughout the course of life, and also often within a family” (Lagerqvist, M., 2013: 98). Attempt to keep second home could be considered as expression of continuity aspect already mentioned above.

In accordance to M. Lagerqvist spending time at second home might mean for people possibility to escape from fragmented modernity “to nature and simplicity” (Lagerqvist, M.) Thus second-home could be the place where people could escape from everyday life characterized by constant rush and demands of work to a “space which is a bolt-hole, a retreat or a genuine break from paramount reality” (Chaplin, D.). At the same time even though escape motive seems to be one of the most popular among SHOs, life at the cottage does not considerably differ from everyday life (Halfacree, K., 2011: 148) because many SHOs choose to spend their leisure time in working activity, consequently possibility of escape might be questioned to some extent. K. Halfacree expresses criticism towards idea of escape and understanding of SHs and places of main residence as comprising two polar phenomena and applies metaphor of luggage for illustrating respective idea: luggage taken to SH could be understand as connecting two phenomena rather than escapism.

One of the main motivations for purchasing second-home in certain area is fact of belonging to an area or attachment. Belonging to an area implies family connections and previous experience of living in an area. High extent of belonging could be determined by family ownership and inheritance. Meanwhile, the introduction of concept of place attachment is mainly
associated with geographer Tuan; respective scholar views “sense of place” as implying “meanings, attachment and satisfaction” that a person or group of people refer to certain place (Dias et al., 2015: 246). Regarding to J.A. Dias et al. sense of place designates meanings and emotions people may attach to geographic space. Individual that has sense of place also has knowledge about the place and may define how the place differs from other places. It is also important to underline that the impact of belonging to an area might last for a prolonged period of time and cover more than one generation after migration to urban areas took place (Tjorve et al., 2013: 288).
2. VECPIEBALGA COUNTY AND DZĒRBENE PARISH TERRITORY DESCRIPTION

2.1. Description of Vecpiebalga county

Vecpiebalga county was created in 2009 where five parishes Dzērbenes, Inešu, Kaives, Taurenes and Vecpiebalga parishes were combined. Vecpiebalga county is located in the central part of Vidzeme highland and bordered by Rauna, Smiltene, Jaunpiebalga, Madona, Ērgļi, Amata and Cēsis counties (Figure 2.1.1.). County is located 157 km away from Riga. The administrative center of Vecpiebalga county is located 137 km away from Riga, 52 km from Cēsis, 83 km from Valmiera and 38 kms from Madona. Land area of Vecpiebalga county is about 542.5 km² (Vecpiebalga County Council, 2014).

![Figure 2.1.1. Vecpiebalgas county and its location](image)
(Made by authors using Envirotech data base, GIS Latvia 10.)

After the land units (2.1.table), the biggest parish in Vecpiebalga county is Dzērbenes parish, with the land area 124.5 square kilometers. The smallest parish is Inešī, with land area 87.7 square kilometers (Vecpiebalga County Council, 2014).
In 2014 there were 4030 residents living in Vecpiebalga county. After the population, the biggest parish in the county is Vecpiebalga parish with 1590 residents, then comes Dzērbenes parish with 1017 residents, while the parish with the least population is Kaives parish with only 418 residents. Population distribution by counties you can see in Figure 2.1.2.

![Population in parishes of Vecpiebalga county](image)

**Figure 2.1.2. Population in parishes of Vecpiebalga county** (Made by authors using CSB data 2009)

As can be seen in the figure 2.1.3. – Vecpiebalga county has continuous population decline since 2000 – by 25% (1378 residents). This steady decline since 2000 can be linked not only to Vecpiebalga county but to whole territory of Latvia because of economic situation in country which leads to its residents migration abroad. Negative birth-death rate and natural aging also leads to steady depopulation in Latvia and Vecpiebalga county.

### 2.1. Table  
**Land area km² of Parishes in Vecpiebalga county** (Made by authors using Vecpiebalga County Council, 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Territorial unit</th>
<th>Land area km²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dzērbenes parish</td>
<td>124.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inešu parish</td>
<td>87.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaives parish</td>
<td>117.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taurenes parish</td>
<td>102.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vecpiebalgas parish</td>
<td>110.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The average population density in the Vecpiebalga county is 8.9 (inhabitant per km$^2$) (Figure 2.1.4.). The population structure of the county is mostly based on the settlements, with their centers spread evenly across the county. The settlement structure of the main frame consists of villages - parish centers. These are the main population centers in the county.

Figure 2.1.3. Population changes in Vecpiebalga county during 2000-2014 (Made by authors using CSB data 2009)

Figure 2.1.4. Population density (people per 1sq/km) (Made by authors using Envirotech data base, GIS Latvia 10 and CSB data base 2014)

These centers together make nearly half (46%) of all county residents, due to the services and work concentration in these parish centers. In these centers the population density can reach about 300 people per 1sq/km. In the remote areas the density is very low, only 1-5 people per
1 sq/km. The territories without any density indicators show the location of water bodies, mostly lakes and forests.

Vecpiebalga county is recognizable for its rich cultural and historical environment, cultural traditions, the values of nature beautiful landscapes and nature protection.

2.2. **Description of Dzērbene parish**

Dzērbene parish is located in Vecpiebalga county (Figure 2.2.1.). The data in the table (Table no. 2.1.) shows that Dzērbenes parish is the largest in Vecpiebalga county by land area – 124.6 km² and second largest by it’s population - 1017 inhabitants. Parish is located about 20 km from the county administrative center, about 40 km from Čēsis and 110 km from Riga, the state capital.

Modern Dzērbenes parish area has long been inhabited castle county, as evidenced by the ancient graveyards and the castle mound near the lake. Up to about the 13th century this area was inhabited by Latgaliens (Itnere, 2012). Historically the settlement of the village was formed around Dzērbenes church, which is located at the road that leads to the former railway station.

Dzerbene parish includes in Vidzeme highlands in the north-west part of Mežoles hilly natural terrain. The small southern part of the territory is located in Augšgaujas degression (Peneze, 2009).

*Figure 2.2.1. Location of Dzērbenes parish in Vecpiebalgas county* (Made by authors using Envirotech data base, GIS Latvia 10)
There are many lakes in Dzērbene parish, biggest among the largest lakes are - Juvieris lake, with the area 77.5 ha and with the maximum depth 20.2 m. Second biggest is Āriasis lake, with the area 16.6 ha, Cemetery lake (11.6 ha), Kaupēni lake (11.3 ha) (Tidriķis, 1995).

In 2014 the total area of forests in Dzērbene parishes reaches 7742.5 ha, or 62% of the district area, which is the second highest index in Vecpiebalga county. The agricultural land area in Dzērbenes parish in 2014 was 3332.5 ha, or 26.7% of total territory. Comparing to 2001, the areas of agricultural land has increased by 4.7% (Vecpiebalgas County Council, 2014).

By the census data, during the period of 2000 to 2011 population has decreased by 21.1%, due to the low birth rate, migration and economic factors in the country (CSP, 2014). The largest population density in parish is concentrated in village centers in Dzērbene village, Kleķeri village and Krustakrogs village and near the main roads. In these local centers most of the buildings, infrastructure and public services, such as schools, shops, post offices etc., are located. The biggest building and settlement density is in the Dzērbene village. The structure of buildings in parish and in the villages is very diverse - old and new built family houses, apartment houses, different institution buildings, buildings built during Soviet period and few abandoned houses.

*Figure 2.2.2. Average area of living quarters and average year construction of conventional dwellings per 1 km²* (Made by authors using Envirotech data base, GHS Latvia 10.2, and CSP, 2015 (Population Census 2011)
Looking at the average living space per square kilometer (Figure 2.2.2.) can see that in village centers this average living space is relatively small $22m^2 - 97m^2$, this can be explained mostly by apartment houses typically located in villages. Higher average living space areas were observed in remote territories, where mostly rural private houses are located.

Based on house construction period, the houses in Dzērbene parish can be divided into 4 major groups (1830-1918), (1919 - 1945), (1946 - 1990), (1991 - 2015). Oldest buildings built in (1830-1918) forms 14% from total buildings. The biggest percentage - 44% is for houses built during the period (1919 - 1945). Houses built in Soviet times constitute a large part - 39%. The smallest part is made of the new buildings, built after 1991, only 8%. Due to the historical development, the oldest buildings mostly are located in the village centers. The big part of the Soviet houses can be described with the collective farms, made in this region during the period (1946 - 1990).
3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Wide variety of data was used to analyze settlement patterns in the case area. These data was divided into secondary and primary data. Secondary data were obtained from several institutions and local government to describe settlement and demographic situation in Vecpiebalga county and Dzērbene parish. Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews from SHOs, local residents and local government in the case area.

Primary and secondary data were used together to gather information about SHOs, their social indicators (age, nationality, gender), geographical indicators (location of their SHs, and information about where they’re coming from), economic indicators (land taxes, cadastral values, market values).

Two different data analyzing approaches were adjusted to this research – qualitative and quantitative. As you can see in Figure 3.1. there were applied different styles of obtaining data. On qualitative approach semi-structured interviews were asked from SHOs, local residents and government authorities and so there was information gathered about qualitative indicators like relationship between groups, motivation to move and also house types (if they’re newly built or old houses that are just renovated). Quantitative data were given through local municipality of Dzērbene and so there was a possibility to estimate SHO count and several demographic and social indicators.

![Figure 3.1](image.png)

Figure 3.1. Quantitative and qualitative approaches and evolution of gathering data during the fieldwork (made by authors)
Research questions:
1. Where are SHs located within the territory of Dzērbene parish? (if there could be found any geographical patterns in distribution of SH?)
2. What are the main characteristics of typical SHO in Dzērbene parish?
3. How could be the relationship between SHOs and local populace characterized?

Secondary data were:
Data from national institutions:
- Central Statistics Bureau of Latvia (population in Vecpiebalga county, population density, average age of living quarters and average year construction of conventional dwellings per 1 km²);
- The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs of Latvia (population in Dzērbene parish and other parishes in Vecpiebalga county);

Unpublished and published data from municipalities:
- Unpublished data about land tax from Dzērbene municipality;
- The Sustainable Development Strategy of Vecpiebalga county (2013 – 2037);

Previous research about settlement in Dzērbene parish:

Research methods were:
- Theoretical studies;
- Gathering and summarizing semi-structured interviews;
- Cartographic method;
- Secondary statistical data selection and analysis;
- Primary data selection and analysis.

Theoretical studies. During the initial stage of collecting data on the field research group made a decision to apply grounded theory as theoretical approach in order to receive data suitable for qualitative analysis. The respective approach implies collecting data in order to create theoretical statements based on obtained empirical material. The choice of this method was related to strict time constraints and was considered to be the applicable for our particular case. “Thick description” - is term that could more precisely characterize approach applied by
our research group during the fieldwork: this term is applied in ethnographic research and designates very detailed description of cultural life (Vogt, W.P., 2005).

**Gathering and summarizing semi-structured interviews.** Before starting interviewing basic questions were made for semi-structured interviews. There were 3 separate forms of interviews, all addressed to SHOs, local residents or government authorities (Appendix No. 1). These questions were about SHOs relationship with locals and government, their motivation to stay and/or move etc. This was like a basic frame and structure for an interview but precise wording and order of asking questions depended on a situation.

Fieldwork was carried out in 2 days (May 10 and May 11) and in total 20 interviews there were made (14 with locals, 2 with SHOs, 4 with municipality authorities). Optimal route of interviews and potential SH areas were drawn based on bachelor thesis made by D. Anančonoka (Anančonoka, 2014). There was a map about permanent residents and seasonal residents in Dzērbene municipality. So there were chosen those territories where locals and SHOs live nearby to ask both groups about conflicts, interactions, motivation etc. (Figure 3.2).

![Figure 3.2. Main interviewing areas of SHOs and local residents living nearby](image)

A map of SHOs (Figure 4.1.1) was made after summarizing qualitative and quantitative data. Also there were made maps about settlement and population density in Vecpiebalga county and Dzērbene parish based on secondary data. Maps were made using program called ArcMap 10.2.2.
Secondary statistical data selection and analysis were done based on data from national institutions in order to create a chapter about population and settlement patterns in the research area. Also secondary data were used for mapping SHOs in Dzērbene parish and creating a typical rural SHO profile in results and discussion chapter. These data were gained from local municipality.

Primary data were obtained during semi-structured interviews and then used to define relationship between SHOs and locals, and SHOs and local government. Also these data did help to find out what were SHO motivations to stay here, to buy house here etc., also frequencies of visiting and house types they’re living in.

But also there were several difficulties research group faced during the fieldwork:

- Research should have been made during weekend time – on Saturday and Sunday. This research started in Sunday afternoon (about 4 pm) and carried out till Tuesday. By this time almost all of SHOs have already migrated to their primary residence places and only retired people could be found here or in our case there was also one resort house owner who was preparing it for starting of a recreational season.

- Also 137 might not be an actual number of SHOs in Dzērbene parish. There possible errors are stated in Chapter 4.2.
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. SHOs in Dzērbene parish – geographical perspective

During field research in Dzērbene parish qualitative and quantitative data were obtained. It was important to know exactly if there are any geographical patterns of SHOs being placed around objects like roads, rivers or lakes.

So based on these data, there was a map of parish created which represents location of SHOs properties (Figure 4.1.1). After processing those qualitative data, it was found that in Dzērbene parish there are 137 land properties whose owners are declared elsewhere, of which four properties have two common owners so in Dzērbene parish there were found 133 SH land properties. These properties are mainly concentrated in the central part of Dzērbene parish and also along the most important roads which links the center of parish with another villages and municipalities. According to the results, also these SHO lands are concentrated near the biggest lakes in the area, especially near Juveris lake.

Figure 4.1.1. SHOs in Dzērbene parish (made by authors, based on data given by Dzērbene municipality and data from semi-structured interviews)
This map is also representing qualitative data, which were obtained during a field work (semi-structured interviews). In general there were identified/recognized 19 SHs and two of their owners were met. They mostly visit their property almost every weekend in spring-summer season or during public holidays or during summertime (“Druvinas”, “Avotnieki”).

So after compiling qualitative and quantitative data it can be seen that mainly SHOs are concentrating at the central part of the area, and also north-eastern and south-eastern parts. Also relatively dense concentration can be found by the most important roads of Dzērbene parish.

4.2. Typical rural area second-home-owner profile

That was also very important not to find out where these SHOs are located geographically, but also to get a typical profile of a SHO in rural area of Latvia. With a help of local Vecpiebalga municipality authorities we got access to their cadastral database estimates and could provide socioeconomical data about locals and those people who are not declared in the parish.

Totals show that by 2014 there were 776 land owners in Dzērbene parish. Only 225 residents are declared in Dzērbene parish. These data include not only private persons which are settled land owners but also those who have plain agricultural and forest lands without any settlement. But still there was a necessity to define only SHOs – that's why 2 data sources were compiled together – geoportal with topographic information (LGIA, 2015) and data given by local government (Dzērbene municipality, 2015). By the end 137 second home owners which are declared elsewhere - were estimated in the area. These owners are used further to create a typical rural area second house owner.

But before carrying out those analyses, there are few errors should be stated. Firstly, in these data there is a slight difference between terms – second home owner and second home person. In these data we could only establish those SH people which are property owners and registered to this land, so here data about their other family members are missing. Second thing is that those owners might have their property but they are not using it no more to live there (not even few days per year). Third – those owners might have been registered and mainly living elsewhere but their second homes aren't left unattended because their retired parents are living there. These 3 things would reduce real amount of SHOs and SH people in this parish. Fourth thing that would increase it is that there cannot be estimated amount of SHOs which are registered to Dzērbene municipality. We were asking about these people to real estate
administrator of Dzērbene and got answered that there are 5-10 declared people that are living elsewhere.

But who are typical SHOs owners of a rural area? How do they “look like”? In what houses do they live in and where they come from? That’s what this chapter will try to explain below.

It was found out that average SHO is male, born in 1960 and coming from Riga. In general, there were some dominant factors, but some were not so typical. For example, when defining gender of those SHOs, only 53% were males, but 47% were females. Also more than 85% of SHOs had traditional Latvian names, and rest of them had Slavic names which are very common in Latvian community, but ending with -s which are characteristic to Latvian language, so they can be recognized as citizens of Latvia. There was also one English name.

More uncertain situation was recognized when talking about age groups that SHOs are representing. Figure 4.2.1 shows that the most common age group were SHOs that are older than 62 years (48 in total and 34.8%). They’re followed by 41-50 year olds who were 29%. This can be associated with motivation to move or to maintain and not to sell their land in this rural area. Most common group is presented by people who have retired and were born before the year 1953. They and group that are 55 – 62 year olds form mainly those people that lost their land during Soviet time and got it back it after Latvia regained independency in 1991. So these people are having strong place attachment to this area because their ancestors had this land and built these homes.

SHOs that are younger than 50 years cannot get described that clearly. They might have the same place attachment that previous group had but according to semi-structured interviews that were carried out in the area, there were locals and SHOs talking about motivation, they’re mostly labor migrants that have permanently moved to Riga and saved their SH’s because of their retired parents still living there or more frequently because their parents signed their property to their name before death. In the second case some of SHs remain abandoned.
When talking about those SHOs and their primary living place they’re declared at, it can be seen that 93% of SHOs are coming from 3 districts of Latvia (Figure 4.2.2). More than a half of SHOs in Dzērbene have signed to Riga municipality, but 22% in Vidzeme and 18% in Pierīga. Riga is known as a main center of providing work-places and study-places and other services in Latvia, but Pierīga in general is known as a suburban region of providing dwelling places to those who are working in Riga. Monocentric structure of Riga Metropolitan area is a result of centralization processes and negative net-migration with Riga and Pierīga municipalities. Those who are from Vidzeme can be recognized as those who have strong place attachment and have their relatives’ homes in Dzērbene. Many of them might have migrated to another place because of creating their own families and leaving parents in houses they were born at. After some time only some of them return and try to keep these houses in a good condition. Others leave them but keep paying a tax, but some of them are trying to sell those lands to people who are mainly from Riga.

There were also 6 SHOs who are not declared in Latvia (3 USA, 1 Denmark, 1 Austria, 1 Anguilla resident). 5 of these persons have typical Latvian names, but their ages differ. 2 of them have born in 30’s so they can be recognized as refugees during World War II. Two of those SHOs are born in late early 60’s and 70’s so they are labor migrants because they are in a working age. There’s also a possibility that Denmark and USA residents had regained property that had been taken away from their ancestors during Soviet time and they’re not born in Latvia and maybe not even native Latvian language speakers. In that case they’re might not be having
aesthetical or emotional attachment to this place but they’re not selling this land for respect to their ancestors.

Another factor to describe typical SHO profile was their SH visiting frequency. To find this out, qualitative data collecting approach and semi-structured interviews were used. Mainly these were opinions collected from locals that live near SHOs except 2 SHOs that really had been interviewed. 14 local residents told us about 17 SHs nearby and their owners. They were mainly from Riga (13/17), but visiting Dzērbene parish only during weekends in spring-summer season (8/17), during summertime (6/17), during each weekend (3/17). 2 SHOs that were interviewed told that they’re visiting their SH during summertime (1/2) and every weekend. Summertime SH people are mainly those who are retired, but spring-summer season weekenders are those who are still working and spending their time with their families here. Third group – those who arrive here on each weekend might be attached to some business activities. S1 told us that his SH is also a resort house and business. He got plain land in 90’s and then built here a resort house. He’s living in Cēsis which is the nearest city from Dzērbene, so he’s driving here each weekend to maintain his place in a good condition even in winter. Also a good thing to mention, that in first 2 groups there were some SHOs that are keeping gardens for themselves (Figure 4.2.3), so this can also can be attached with an environmentalism approach that means they’re actually living in the city, but want to spend their time and do activities in a rural area.
Also one factor that needed a qualitative approach was defining typical SH types in the case area. As shown on Chapter 2 previously, 44% of houses in Dzērbene were built during 1919-1945. 39% during Soviet time, but 14% before Latvia gained independency for the first time in 1918 (CSB, 2015). There are 2 typical second house types – those who are built in pre-Soviet time (at some occasions in Soviet time also) and those who are newly built (Figure 4.2.4). First type is characteristic to Post-socialistic countries like Estonia and Latvia and especially in marginal rural areas of those countries. So the vast majority of homes that were discovered during fieldwork were from first type – they were built mainly in 20s, 30s and on many occasions have been renovated since then. Second type of second houses constituted 10,5 % of all observed second houses. There were few resort houses around biggest water bodies in the case area. But there were also resort houses that were renovated and converted from old houses, but they were not typical for this area.
In order to sum up this quantitative data about age, nationality etc. and qualitative data about motivation to move, there were two socioeconomical SHO profiles created:

1. These SHOs are emotionally tied to this rural place and environment. They are born in here or spent their childhood during summertime. Also these SHOs got their home from their parents but are still living elsewhere because of bad employment possibilities and service conditions here in the area. They’re planning to live/stay here more frequently after retiring.

2. This group can be called as a typical socioeconomical SHOs, who have purchased their houses in a rural area from group 1 members who want to sever their ties with parents’ homes. They’re mainly coming from Riga or another urban areas and want to have their own second home for family to rest in. This environmentalistic approach drags people out of urban areas but mainly they want to maintain their ties with Riga and have it in a assessable distance. That’s why people mainly tend to purchase real estate in Riga metropolitan area. But those real estates might not be affordable for all. For example averagely one property in Mārupe municipality which borders with Riga, costs around 200000 euro or more, but in rural areas it’s possible to get a property which costs under 100000 euros (ss.lv, 2015). Of course mainly this market value depends on if there are additional land to this property or to a condition of it. That would be more objective to compare cadastral values between Dzērbene and near-Riga municipalities, but we don’t have such data for Pierīga. For Dzērbene an average cadastral value for its residents was 9730 euros, but in Pierīga this number must be higher.

But to sum this up, an economic status plus environmentalistic approach might be the reason why those city residents want to purchase a land in such a rural areas like Dzērbene.
4.3. SHOs AS A PART OF SOCIAL LIFE IN DŽĒRBBENE PARISH

4.3.1. Relationship between SHOs and locals

Research about relationships between second house owners, locals and local authorities is based on original primary data collected by researchers. Primary data was collected using semi-structured interviews with local residents, local authorities and second house owners. In order to collect opinions about relationships between these groups we asked different questions for each group. The most important questions addressed to locals and second house owners that could describe these relationships were concerning neighbours: “Do you know each other?”, “What is relationships between them and you?”, “Are there any problems or conflicts against each other (between you?)”, “Are there any particular activities or any kind of communication between them?” Hereinafter in the text interviews with locals will be designated as (L), interviews with second house owners as (S), and interviews with local authorities will be designated as (A).

Interviews with locals revealed that communication between these two groups is quite poor. Although most of the local respondents answered that the relationships with second house owners, those who are their neighbors, are good, they claimed that the second house owners are mostly self-contained, they are not interested in others and they are mostly busy in their own yards and gardens. Some locals, for example, (interview L5 and interview L7) answered that they know their neighbours (SHO) only by name or surname.

Both second house owners (interview S1 and interview S2) said that they have good relationships with neighbours, and there are no any conflicts or problems. One of the second house owners (interview S1), who spent his whole childhood in observed area said that he always visit his neighbors to get to know about local news. The other second house owner (interview S1), which owns the house for 11 years said that the relations with the neighbors are good, because once they worked together, and also now, there is nothing to fight for and there is no disagreement among themselves.

While talking about any possible conflicts between locals and second house owners representatives of local municipality, (interview A3), said that conflicts happen very rarely. As an example they mentioned one disagreement between second house owner and local, which was concerning about pasture fences usually situated too close to second house borders. Another case was when second house owner complained about neighbours untidy yard and untidy environment around his house.
Regarding to the question, how locals evaluate the impact of the second house owners presence in the area and what is their attitude to them, generally, all respondents answered that they have positive attitude towards SHOs. Local populace consider as a positive aspect that second house owners restore old houses, so they are not empty, they clean up their yards and everything around the house, they are kind and polite.

While planning the research objectives and emphasizing our interest towards relationships between SHOs and locals it was predicted by our research group that relationships might have conflictual character and described through idea of “contested space”. Meanwhile obtained interviews revealed that understanding of relationships between two respective groups as “contested space” and conflict of interests probably would not be applicable in our case study area. As it was mentioned in part devoted to theoretical framework absence of competition for the same resources in the area and absence of disparities in social and economic characteristics between local population and SHOs would reduce level of conflicts.

4.3.2. Relationship between SHOs and local authorities

As previously mentioned, the interviews were carried out with Vecpiebalga county municipality as well as Dzērbene parish council. The aim of these interviews was to find out the role of second house owners on the level of county and parish. The main questions for local authorities were: ”How active are second house owners in local social life?” „What is the impact of second house owners on local community and local development?” „If any preference is given within local policy to one of the respective groups: second house owners or local residents?” In order to receive information about relationships between these groups we asked from the second house owners: “Do you take part in community activities?” „Do you participate in any events and celebrations hosted by municipality?” „Do you take part in any NGOs?” „Are you interested in local development, do you make any proposals for local government?” etc.

All second house owners on the question: “Do you take part in community activities?” answered that usually they are not really interested in participating in local activities. They claimed that they are not attending events or celebrations held in parish, but also very rare are participating in events held on the county level. One of the second house owners (interview S1), said that sometimes he is attending the event "Piebalgas week", if it coincides with the visit to second house. Other second house owner (interview S2) said that annually they come to commemorative cemetery event. Both of them also are not taking part in any non governmental organization.
Both second house owners and local authorities said that they are satisfied with relationships with each other and there are no specific problems. Main mode of contact between local authorities and second house owners is formal and connected to obligation to pay property taxes. All second house owners are property holders, and annually they have to pay real estate tax. Both local authorities Vecpiebalga county municipality (interview A1) and Dzērbene parish council (interview A2) said that they are interested to have more second houses, because of taxes paid to local government. According to data given by municipality of Dzērbene, second house owners as real estate taxpayers constitute 46.4% of all real estate taxpayers in Dzerbene parish. That shows how important is this group of people economically to the local government. Also it was estimated that average cadastral value by land property of SHO owner is 10818 euros while for local residents it is 9394 euros (Dzērbene municipality, 2015).

Regarding to the practical question of garbage collection, according to local management rules, all house owners must have waste containers, which means that all owners must sign a contract with a private waste management company. Local authorities mentioned within the interviews that such restrictions were adopted due to cases when in the bus stops were left garbage bags. Another restriction from local authorities concerns estate management. This restriction establishes that owners have to keep their property in good condition, otherwise, if for instance owners of agricultural land don’t take proper care of land, government might give a penalty to property owner which is two times higher than established percent paid from cadastral value of land (1.5%).

As it was mentioned above second house owners role in local development is limited to payment of taxes. During the interviews, both second house owners said that they are satisfied with infrastructure, there is no lack of anything and there is nothing they would like to change. Both of the interviewed second house owners told that there is also that they do not have real need to use public services provided in the town. Usually if they come to second house in weekends, they do most of the things beforehand, for example buy food or gardening tools etc. The local authorities said that second house owners generally do not come and complain about anything and do not offer their own ideas. This was also confirmed during interviews with second house owners where they claimed that they do not participate in public discussions organized by municipality.
Absence of involvement in local policy making of SHO and limiting of involvement in local community to participation in cultural events could be seen from the perspective of escapism, which is despite critique in academia at the same time considered to be one of the most popular motivations for purchasing and spending time at second home.

Overall, the local authorities said that they evaluate impact of second house owners positively, mostly because of real estate taxes that the parish receives from them and usually SHO keep their property clean and attractive. Despite this local authorities pointed out that they do not think that they should apply any extra actions for making the parish attractive for potential second house owners as Dzērbene parish is already attractive for newcomers because of charming landscape and views.
CONCLUSION

- SHOs are a very important group economically to Dzērbene municipality. There are 137 SHOs that are registered elsewhere but having a land in Dzērbene parish. That is 17% or all land properties.
- An average SHOs gender is a male with Latvian nationality, who’s born in early 1960s and coming to Dzērbene parish from Riga municipality.
- The most common age group for SHOs in Dzērbene parish are those who are older than 62 years (48 in total and 34,8%) and group that are 55 – 62 year olds. They are mainly those people who lost their land during Soviet time and got it back it after Latvia regained independency in 1991. These people are having strong place attachment to this area because their ancestors had this land and built these homes.
- SHOs that are younger than 50 years cannot get described that clearly. They might have the same place attachment but according to semi-structured interviews that were carried out in the area, they’re mostly labor migrants that have permanently moved to Riga and saved their SH’s because of their retired parents still living there or more frequently because their parents signed their property to them before death.
- More than a half of SHO’s in Dzērbene have signed to Riga municipality, but 22% in Vidzeme and 18% in Pierīga. Riga is known as a main center of providing work-places and study-places and other services in Latvia, but Pierīga in general is known as a suburban region of providing dwelling places to those who are working in Riga. Those who are from Vidzeme can be recognized as those who have strong place attachment and have their relatives’ homes in Dzērbene.
- The vast majority of SH that were discovered during fieldwork were old houses – they were built mainly in 20s, 30s and on many occasions have been renovated since then. Newly built houses were less than 1/10. They were few resort houses around biggest waterbodies in the case area.
- There were two rural socioeconomical SHO profiles formed:
  1) SHO’s who are emotionally tied to this rural place and environment. They are born in here or spent their childhood during summertime because their relatives lived in here.
  2) Typical socioeconomical SHOs, who have purchased their houses in a rural area from group 1 members who want to sever their ties with parents’ homes. They’re mainly coming from
Riga or another urban areas and want to have their own second home for family to rest in. They would like to purchase a property somewhere in rural areas near Riga, but they cannot afford it.

- Previous ideas about possible conflicts were not confirmed by qualitative data obtained within interviews: SHOs and locals were stating that they do not have any problems or in certain cases relationship were limited by formal acquaintance. Absence of contestations and conflicts could be explained by character of distribution of SHs within the area and minor differences in social and economic statuses between two groups.

- According to local authorities participating in research, SHOs are not involved in local governance. Anyway impact of SHOs for local development is evaluated as predominantly positive in monetary terms as rural municipality receives income from taxes paid for property.
REFERENCES


Unpublished material


31
Dzērbene municipality 2015. Unpublished data about cadastral information in perish. MS Excel Database.


APPENDIX

Appendix No.1. Base frame of structured interviews (made by authors)

Second home owners
1. Gender
2. Age (not exactly age but divide into groups)
3. Type of property usage:
   a. permanent resident
   b. just for holidays (weekends, celebrations )
   c. just for summer
   d. maybe home will be abandoned?
4. Where is your permanent residence located at?
5. How good is your relationship with your neighbours?
6. Do you participate in any events hosted by municipality of Vecpiebalga? Why?
7. Are you participating in any non-governmental organisations on county?
8. Can you describe your neighbourhood with the local government? Do you receive any benefits or are there any restrictions?
9. Have you ever participated in any government public discussions?
10. Have you had any problems with local people while living in this county?
11. Why did you start living here?
12. Future plans (?)
13. How do you see development potential for the county? What measures should local government apply?

Government
1. What rules are there about taking out garbage?
2. Do second house users have to pay for garbage takeouts?
3. Are there any people who are getting involved in public discussions and events?
4. What is impact of second house owners on local community (local developments)?
5. Does local government give preference to one of the group: Second house owners or local residents?
6. Is there any complaining from local residents about the second house owners?
7. Is there any complaining from second house owners about local residents?
8. Do you think it’s positive or negative to have these second house owners in the parish?

Local residents
1. Do you know any second house owner in Dzērbene parish?
2. Are you familiar with them?
3. How good is your relationship with second house owners living near to you?
4. Do you think it’s positive or negative to have these second house owners in the parish?