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## QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT OF SLOVENIA

### *Abstract*

*The trends of urbanisation are followed through analyses of urban standard in Slovenia and with the reference on the cyclical model of development. Theoretical model and pragmatic changes do not correspond to each other but rather enable to recognise the main streams of the urban process. According to data analyses, given by the project of the Quality of Life research over the last ten years, Slovenia is demonstrating a specific overlapping of traditional and modern development. The first concerns the role of the family and widely spreading population over the territory. The second discovers the extensive sub-urbanisation process, which is allowing the living in better environment and commuting to the nearest city for work or education. Suburbanisation was sustained by the lack of available housing in the cities. Slovenia therefore keeps the polycentric urban development, while suburbanisation might, with the trends of migrations and spreading the central role of the city, resuscitate the process of new metropolitanisation.*

*Keywords: Slovenia, urbanization, cyclical model, social and urban standards of life, facilities, transport, ecology*

### ANALYSIS OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN SLOVENIA FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE CYCLICAL MODEL AND RESIDENTIAL MOBILITY FLOWS

The urbanisation process in Slovenia has been, for most of the period after World War II, distinct from the other former Yugoslav republics and it has also had its own peculiarities in comparison to similar or more developed societies in Europe. The historical and cultural heritage of urban settlements and the level of developed infrastructural networks can be included among these distinct features. The fact that the polycentric model of development had been successful in Slovenia and not in other parts of Yugoslavia is attributed to these factors (B.V.Dekleva, 1992).

The polycentric model fosters the development of urban centres with different basic functions - such as the industrial sector, academic and educational centres, tourism and the like - in opposition to the monocentric model where more centralised activities are principally focused in a single urban area. The second specific feature of Slovenia consists in the high proportion (almost one- half of the population) which lives in more than 5,700 settlements. There are from 78 to 250 urban settlements in Slovenia, the number varying in accordance with different criteria.

In recent decades the proportion of the population living in the countryside has not diminished as a result of intensive industrialisation; rather, the decrease has been mostly due to the suburbanisation process which has attracted new inhabitants to small settlements near the city rather than to the urban area itself. Suburban areas are attracting an ever increasing number of urban inhabitants as well. Even if the amount of population moving into urban areas does not actually change, the size of the urban areas may seem to decline due to changes in administrative borders. Typical suburban areas had attracted, according to some analyses, approximately 30% of the Slovenian population by 1991 (Ravbar, 1991:124). As a result of the growth of suburban population, the growth of bigger Slovenian cities has been stagnant since the seventies. Therefore, what we may see in the future will be so-called stable urban development which relies on natural population growth and extremely selective migration.

Slovenia has also been quite specific in its development pattern in that it has maintained traditional characteristics and life-style within its smaller settlements. Conversely, Slovenia at a relatively early stage in its development has experienced the onset of the process of suburbanisation as well as desurbanisation which are typically present in far more developed regions of Europe. Desurbanisation is the process of migratory flows out of cities to the countryside and represents the process which generally follows suburbanisation, the difference between the two being that off-urban flows go to the hinterland rather than to suburban areas. Other migrations are also directed to the hinterland rather than to the city. It is difficult to prove the resemblance of Slovenia's desurbanisation to similar processes taking place in European countries as the reasons for migration differ among countries. For instance, in Slovenia suburbanisation has mostly taken place as a result of the lack of cheap available land for housing construction elsewhere and of the poorly developed labour market. Both factors result in the lower mobility of population and prevent an increase in migration. Thus, in Slovenia the suburbanisation process is more a product of the above-mentioned imperfections or deficiencies rather than the flow of the middle-class to a new life-style (as reported by Nystrom, 1989 in Sweden). The cyclical urbanisation model (van den Berg et al., 1982), is deeply connected with economic stages of growth, alternating between the rapid growth of urban centres (before and after the Second World War) and the spread of population toward the suburbs and then out of the cities altogether to the countryside (desurbanisation).

The cyclical model defines four sequential phases; urbanisation or the growth of urban populations which is generally followed by suburbanisation. At this stage, segments of the population move outside cities yet remain in the vicinity of urban centres. Suburban development is then followed by desurbanisation (population movement to the countryside) which is ultimately followed by re-urbanisation, renewed urban growth. During the phases of suburbanisation and desurbanisation, there is often a noticeable increase in the size of small cities, a phenomenon which was emphasized in Slovenia by the strong local autonomy of these communities and by polycentric development. Therefore, the genesis of this process in Slovenia differs from similar cases in Europe and this fact might be the reason for

surprising developments in the future of Slovenia. Unlike the rest of Europe, where the process of suburbanisation is considered irreversible, in Slovenia there remain expectations of a rejuvenation of urban growth. The middle and upper classes have been the principal initiators of European suburbanisation and the presence of good communication and infrastructure systems has also enabled people to live in a better environment without being disconnected from the urban world. Conversely, suburban areas in Slovenia have, as reported by Ravbar (1991), a mixed social structure. Most of the active population commute daily to urban centres, a factor which contributes to the traffic and ecological problems in suburban Slovenia.

The first three phases of the cyclical model are followed by reurbanisation which brings people back to renewed and reorganised cities; there is very little evidence documenting this process (Nystrom, 1992). The problem with the cyclical model is that individual phases are difficult to recognise in terms of long and short-term changes and that the actual flows often do not follow the linear prospective indicated by the model. The case of Slovenia should therefore be analyzed not only in accordance with the three-phase process of demographic flows but also paying close attention to the reasons for particular migrations. This type of analysis will facilitate the forecasting of population movements as well as the making of useful parallels with other European experiences.

Identification of both "unquestionable" and mixed flows does enable a better understanding of migration problems in a particular environment and puts previous experiences in a light which could be useful for everyday practice. For instance, during the period of extensive urban growth following World War II (1955-1970), it was hoped that the industrial construction of new European cities would resolve housing shortages and the subsequent overcrowding of cities. However, unexpected negative aspects of this concept emerged, revealing the need for re-evaluation and continued construction of this type was abandoned in European cities. In Slovenia, such construction projects proceeded through the eighties. The next logical step in Europe indicated construction should take place farther from urban centres, thus creating new cities and working places in order to avoid urban sprawl. This concept has also been severely criticised because moving labour markets has not always been successfully achieved. In Slovenia, we have only a few "prototypes" of this concept, realised, for example, in Velenje and Nova Gorica.

After a brief spell of urban growth in Slovenia which followed World War II, a period of strong local decentralisation ensued which enabled smaller urban centres to increase and develop. Social and economic standards in those polycentric network centres prospered and attracted a new social structure of inhabitants (Quality of Life research, 1984/6). The lag in housing construction pulled families out of the cities and into smaller settlements where they often relied on building their own single-family homes. Because migratory flows in Slovenia have been directed to very small settlements in the hinterlands (albeit often in developed regions), most bigger cities have stagnated over the last decade. This process has engulfed many

of the older regional centres as well (Ravbar, 1991; Dekleva, 1986). Conversely, those parts of the countryside within developed regions have entered a dynamic process of urbanisation. In spite of this fact, the infrastructural standards in those regions are often in substantial decline.

Certain indicators of the process of suburbanisation lead one to reasonably conclude that the principal motivators of such mobility are life-style and, specifically, the quality of the environment and adequate solutions to housing problems (Nystrom, 1989; Ravbar, 1991). But most other problems are poorly resolved in suburban life: namely, a lack of adequate infrastructure, communication and other services persists. The tendency of those employed in urban centres to commute on a daily basis is on the rise and the absence of appropriate urban planning in the cities and the ever more acute ecological problems are only the most obvious symptoms of the trend. The ability to choose one's living environment is deeply tied to the life cycle of the family. Mobility no doubt functions as a symbol of possibilities and the ability to act on one's immediate desires. In Slovenia, the proportion of such families "seems" fairly high, where nearly 60% of households live in family housing (Public Opinion R., 1994). However, many of them have settled in the countryside which indicates that they did not necessarily have the means to choose where to settle. Be that as it may, residing in a one-family house is clearly the preferred method of housing in Slovenia.

When the era of economic prosperity was followed by economic crisis in the seventies (a crisis which has not yet been fully overcome), the differences in social standards between urban and countryside environments not only persisted but also became more accentuated. Many analysts tend to think the opposite, believing that as a result of the urbanisation of the countryside these differences are disappearing. It seems rather that individual standards in the countryside are improving far more than the social standards (KŽ, 1986). It is also true that the proportion of employees in the primary sector has declined and people in the countryside tend to live far better than ever before. Nevertheless, social standards cannot be made to increase along with substantial state investments. Therefore, Ravbar's observation that the countryside often looks more urbanised than it actually is, or conversely, that in some villages people actually do have a very urban life-style, is in fact well-grounded (Ravbar, 1991: 98, 110). In any case, it should not be misunderstood that employment in sectors other than agriculture is sufficient to create an urban environment. If we are attempting to evaluate standards, than it might be better to take as an indicator the level of social standards - for example, by measuring urbanisation indirectly by the employment in the third and quarter sector (like services for example). Another possibly important indicator of urban development is the level of collective consumption which indicates the integration of people into formal, organised and collective structures as a means to satisfy their needs (whether encouraged by the state or the market). E. Castells (1978) did not make this analytical term operational but it is possible to understand it as evolving services and infrastructure as well as access to education, health, communication networks etc.

The term collective consumptions is thus in opposition to self-provision (individualisation) and the subsistence level of living which is still very much present in the Slovenian countryside. It is self-evident that collective consumption requires a certain level of organized living, one which depends principally on forms of state or local organisation and financing. Lacking the structures of collective consumption, the countryside population is thus deprived of many services. Indicators of service present in the environment, as determined by Quality of Life research, covers collective consumption; but this could also be indicated by the percentage the GDP allocated for collective needs. KZ indicators thus reveal the level of urbanisation in the environment which is not directly connected to the number of inhabitants, the density of the population or to the administrated borders of urban areas.

### IN WHAT PHASE OF DEVELOPMENT IS SLOVENIA ACCORDING TO THE CYCLICAL MODEL ?

According to the cyclical model, Slovenia in the last decade could fit into the interim phase between suburbanisation and desurbanisation. Therefore, we might expect the population of the countryside to increase in the near future. Nevertheless, it is also likely that this process will be demphasized in Slovenia. Indeed, several factors are working against it: namely, we are a society in transition; a society opposed to formal planning; we are opening up to Europe, and; market-oriented economic systems are being introduced. All of this might well encourage migration flows back to bigger urban areas. People might feel that urban centres offer more chances for work and that the newly diversified system will allow new opportunities in education, career and the like. Motivated by these possibilities, new migration flows may create metropolitanisation on a scale which will foster and expand the influence of urban centres into more developed regions (Dekleva, 1995; Ravbar, 1991). Metropolitanisation is essentially the selective process of flows (of labour, commerce, power) into the area with the highest potential for development and the most favourable market prospective, as a rule, these conditions prevail in the most central area. Control over ever-growing resources causes the influence of the urban centre to spread over territory as well as over economic and political activities. In the sixties, such a process had a short blossoming in Slovenia and then was interrupted due to the development of the polycentric concept. As it relates to the experience of other European countries, the flows of suburban migration in Slovenia attracted that segment of the population which would normally be directed to the cities. The lack of available or adequate housing in cities was frequently the most important reason for such a move. Therefore, these population flows were not comprised of the same social class as in other European countries where such classes generally had adequate skills and resources available to them to make a free life-style choice. Circumstances related to the transitional phase and to the economic crisis caused a great deal of disinvestment in infrastructure - and, in particular, in communications - and suburban areas have suffered greatly as a result.

The lag in building up infrastructure in accordance with the needs of new migrants is a general feature of suburbanisation and desurbanisation. European experience indicates that only adequate state intervention can

overcome this gap. Compromise between capital interests and social needs as well as pragmatic planning are necessary in order to avoid major ecological costs. Such a combination made this phase of development feasible (T.Deelstra & O.Yanitsky, 1991; Danemark & Elander, 1994). The historical Scandinavian compromise between capitalism and a vision of social welfare without deep social divisions certainly represents the most successful case, making no mention of how important the impact of such a state policy can be for general welfare and the quality of life. It is not surprising that Sweden was the first to introduce Quality of life research in an effort to promote more efficient policies relating to the equalisation of living standards and environment. However, an immediate comparison of Slovenia with such examples would be unreasonably ambitious. The following analyses will focus on the specific Slovenian case as regards development and finding Slovenia's place in the cyclical model. It will also attempt to shed light on potential future problems and the consequences of the absence of any reasonable urban and social planning with an emphasis on the lack of social vision within the specific regions and within the country as a whole.

## THE QUALITY OF THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT IN SLOVENIA

We will begin with a comparative analyses of social and other services in the living environment of Slovenia over the last ten years. Most data concerns the access of inhabitants to the basic infrastructure: educational facilities, health services, child care centres, food supply, communication services, public transportation, recreational areas and the like. We have separated the basic information about available services into five fields of activities: 1) education; 2) health; 3) culture and recreation; 4) communication and public transportation, and; 5) food supply. We have evaluated each of these five activities and given each a field indicator (rating from one to three: no services available, few services available and all services available). Then we have calculated one complex indicator based on the five values arrived at for each service activity. This method enables evaluation of the specific quality of the environment and reveals its deficiency (or efficiency) in supplying needed services. As a separate set of data, subjective perceptions of the ecological quality of the environment are presented in which individuals express their perception of ecological disturbances in their environment, such as noise, air and water pollution, traffic disturbances, etc. Social contacts in the living environment will be the third item discussed and will function as an indicator of social integration as opposed to social exclusion. The final item in the analysis will deal specifically with users of public transportation, an area of special interest in Slovenia due to the severity of traffic problems in Slovenian cities. All data has been analyzed separately depending of what type of environment is being assessed: large urban centres, small urban centres and countryside settlements. With these indicators and classifications we can compare and evaluate certain dimensions of the quality of the environment and the level of social standards available to inhabitants. As a rule, the higher the social standards, the greater the extent of collective consumption and the higher the level of urbanisation of the environment.

## GENERAL FEATURES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN STANDARDS BETWEEN 1984 AND 1994 IN THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT OF SLOVENIA

The complex indicator of the quality (and quantity) of available services as an indicator of social standards can also be utilized as a criteria in determining the level of urban development in a specific location. Therefore, this analysis may also serve to reveal the flows of urban expansion to different types of settlements. Slovenia has a great number of small countryside settlements which cannot be strictly classified as traditional villages. However, there does tend to be a strong link between the level of social standards, the size of the city and the pace of economic development. Social standards tend to be linked also to the level of collective consumption which, as a rule, is lower in the countryside.

The development of the service sector in Slovenia has not dramatically changed over the last ten years and we might argue that this indicates stagnation in service development. Yet it is also an understandable situation for a society which is undergoing radical transformation while facing an economic crisis. Nevertheless, there are also certain structural problems which are present in the process which for the most part relate to transformations and shifts in the allocation of resources to areas of collective consumption (E.Castells, 1978). For example, the allocation of funds as dictated by the market creates new potentials in some spheres while other areas suffer from the lack of resources caused by the general retreat of state funding. In the case of Slovenia, it was the reform of local communities which had the greatest effect on certain regions and small cities. These reforms took place while the federal government was busy reorganising its priorities. Thus, social groups in less developed regions and in remote parts of the hinterland have been particularly hard hit.

The preceding discussion makes it clear that the so-called process of de-elitisation, which had begun prior to the nineteen-eighties, has now ended (B.V.Dekleva, 1984/6). De-elitisation was a conscious (i.e. state and locally-planned) re-allocation of resources in an effort to provide certain services to all inhabitants, a policy which was intended to decrease differences between urban and countryside settlements and to promote equalisation as regards social standards.

De-elitisation has been a persistently pursued policy in many developed societies over the last twenty years and was a formally accepted concept in most socialist countries. This policy had somewhat controversial results in the different regions of the former-Yugoslavia. Slovenia and Croatia benefited the most from the policy due to certain historical advantages. The strong social redistribution of services and resources into various regions and into both large and small local centres decreased differences in social standards creating an effect which spilled over into the countryside as well (B.V.Dekleva, 1984, 1988). However, in the eighties these differences started to become once again more pronounced and had a stronger impact in certain social areas.

A comparison of the complex indicator of social standards, which integrates measures of seventeen different services, reveals that between 1984 and 1994 the proportion of population in service-deprived areas increased by 1%; the complex indicator increased by 2.3% since 1991 which is disproportional regarding the usual differences observed between these environments. The situation for those inhabitants living in poorly-serviced areas has been better, most likely due to the initiative of private entrepreneurs (Table 1). Both groups demonstrate that the share of badly serviced population decreased over the last ten years only by 1.6%.

**Table 1**  
**INDICATOR OF URBAN QUALITY OF SPACE - THE LEVELS OF SOCIAL /MARKET SERVICES, AVAILABLE TO THE INHABITANTS IN THEIR ENVIRONMENT, IN %**

indicator's values / year	1984	1991	1994
deprived of services	8.2	6.7	9.0
very badly serviced	25.2	26.6	23.0
deficiently serviced	20.2	17.4	19.4
satisfactory	18.0	16.1	15.0
very well serviced	28.4	33.2	33.6

Sources: Quality of Life, IDV;B.V.Dekleva, 1984/91/94, values definitions:

From the five fields indicators with three values one complex indicator with five values has been formed; values include the completeness of fields services, not just the number itself. Areas deprived of any services and those badly serviced entirely lack from two fields to four and the remaining fields provide incomplete services.

All the figures are taken from analyses with adequate significance.

Almost a third of the population of Slovenia still lives in a natural and healthy environment, in locations which are almost entirely un-urbanised (Tables 1,2). That is one of the specific characteristics of Slovenia in comparison to other equally or more urbanised countries and is a trait which is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. The proportion of inhabitants living in fairly well-serviced locations decreased by 3% yet, at the same time, the proportion living in well-serviced areas increased. Obviously, this is a selective (market) process in which certain locations attract more services while other, no doubt less prosperous, locations experience a decline in services.



**Table 2**  
**INDICATOR OF URBAN QUALITY ACCORDING TO TYPE OF THE CITY**  
**THE SHARE OF POPULATION ACCORDING THE TYPE OF CITY AND THE LEVEL OF SERVICES**

level of services *0	1984				1994					
	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	
type of cities:**										
Ljubljana, Maribor	0.9	13.6	28.9	26.2	30.4	0.5	9.1	18.7	28.8	42.9
reg., local centres	0.9	9.3	13.2	15.5	61.1	1.2	9.7	9.5	13.3	66.2
countryside	14.4	37.1	20.5	16.4	11.7	16.1	34.9	24.5	10.6	14.0
Slovenia	8.2	25.2	20.2	18.0	28.4	9.0	23.0	19.4	15.0	33.6

\* share of inhabitants living in the environment who are:

0= deprived of services 1= very badly serviced 2= deficiently serviced

3= satisfactory 4= very well serviced

\*\* urban areas include central, regional and local centres, countryside covers the remainder of the population.

The proportion of people who are living in very well-serviced places increased over the last ten years by about 5%, which is adequate. Nevertheless, such an improvement has not occurred in countryside settlements and is not stable in smaller urban centres either. Some smaller centres have actually experienced an increase in the proportion of those living in very badly-serviced areas. It is highly likely that Slovenia will have to deal with problems of economic collapse in certain local centres. Most improvements (by some 12.5%, see Table 2) have occurred in larger urban centres such as Ljubljana and Maribor which are attractive markets for various commercial activities and services. These examples reinforce our expectation that it will be the larger urban centres which will prosper in the near future and the more marginal locations which will face growing problems (Dekleva, 1992).

To reiterate, it is the small and regional centres which now face, following a relatively prosperous period during the eighties, severe crises and stagnation as a result of the collapse of local economies upon which many inhabitants are dependent. Another contributing factor is the retreat of the state from funding certain services which support social standards. The most recent local reform which increased the number of communities from 62 to over 250 certainly did not improve this situation, since the smaller communities which were created lack their own resources. The increasing discrepancies in social standards reveal the basic liberal market orientation which in fact fosters the previous differences. The general tendency toward stagnation will cause a variety of structural and selective consequences in the different types of settlements effected.

## CHANGES BETWEEN 1984 AND 1994 FOR VARIOUS TYPES OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES AND ACCORDING TO THE TYPE OF SETTLEMENTS

The analyses of specific types of services and activities over the last ten years reveals even greater variations in the level of change. We have divided services into those which have been financed by the state and those which are delivered by the private sector. The first group includes education, health, culture and most of the infrastructural services such as communications, roads, public transportation, etc. We also include in this group ecological services. Within the second group, we have included most areas of food supply, some recreational activities, most household services and certain specific services from the first group over which the state does not have monopolistic power but does regulate standards (such as health and education).

### HEALTH, EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE SERVICES

Elementary schools and child care centres which are in close proximity to the home fall among those services which are considered fundamental for a large part of the population and their quality of life, in particular, for those social groups with younger children. These centres also play an important role in the cultural, recreational and educational activities of the community as a whole. In spite of their importance, over the last ten years these fields have experienced substantial stagnation (Table 3). It should be noted that such stagnation has not posed a problem for populations in urban centres such as Ljubljana and Maribor as these services are available to most of the population already (89.4%). The share of 5.7% in 1984 which did not have access to these services had decreased to 3.3% in 1994.

The countryside population reveals quite a different situation. The already high share of unserved population, 44.6% in 1984, has increased to 47% in 1994. Moreover, the proportion of well-served population has remained unchanged. In sum, there has been no improvement in this area over the last ten years. Regional and local centres have reduced access to their services as well (by some 3% over the ten years) and, as a result, there has been a general stagnation. However, as in the case of the large urban centres, countryside settlements had a relatively good starting point, with these services being accessible to some 88% of the population (Tables 2,3).

### CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION

Culture, which is at least in part subsidised by the state, is one of the few fields of activity that has seen progress over the last ten years. The greatest improvements have occurred in Ljubljana and Maribor. Regional and local centres have been stagnating but, surprisingly, access to culture among countryside populations has improved during this period. It is difficult to find a reasonable explanation for this phenomenon since it is well-known that the state has reduced financial support for culture. It should also be noted that the data we have collected does not assess the content of cultur-

al activities nor the frequency of performances nor does it provide information about the working conditions of those employed in cultural activities. Measuring the degree of access to such services only provides one point of view about these activities which may not, in certain specific cases, represent the most important one. Is it possible to hypothesise that the introduction of cultural animators and specific cultural programmes has proved to be efficient over this period?

**Table 3**  
**QUALITY OF URBAN ENVIRONMENT ACCORDING TO THE TYPE OF THE CITIES BETWEEN 1984 AND 1994 IN % OF THE POPULATION. EXTREME DIMENSIONS ARE PRESENTED.**

the level of services	1984		1994	
	no services	has all services	no services	all services
type of cities				
<b>EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE</b>				
Ljubljana, Maribor	5.7	89.2	3.3	89.4
Regional and local centres	6.0	88.6	8.9	88.0
Countryside settlements	44.6	40.8	47.0	40.1
Slovenia	n=2338 26.9	62.8	n=1744 28.1	62.7
<b>HEALTH</b>				
Ljubljana, Maribo	34.1	52.0	25.4	60.7
Regional and local centres	19.5	71.2	17.9	74.7
Countryside settlements	70.1	17.5	72.8	16.9
Slovenia	49.7	38.2	48.7	41.0
<b>CULTURE</b>				
Ljubljana, Maribor	21.5	49.0	11.2	54.1
Regional and local centres	11.0	76.0	12.5	76.0
Countryside settlements	39.7	40.6	40.5	42.5
Slovenia	28.7	51.6	27.2	53.7
<b>TRANSPORT, COMMUNICATION</b>				
Ljubljana, Maribo	2.6	66.4	1.3	86.7
Regional and local centres	2.4	86.9	3.1	86.2
Countryside settlements	22.5	33.9	25.1	32.5
Slovenia	13.3	54.2	14.5	57.6
<b>FOOD SUPPLY</b>				
Ljubljana, Maribor	2.2	88.1	0.7	95.6
Regional and local centres	2.3	87.9	3.5	90.9
Countryside settlements	22.7	32.7	21.2	45.8
Slovenia	13.3	58.0	12.4	67.8

Sources: QL, 1984, 1994 by B.V.Dekleva

Data about communications includes access to public transportation, banks, public telephones, post offices and the like. Within the last ten years, access to these services has improved only in Ljubljana and Maribor. In 1994, some 87.7% of the inhabitants of these urban centres had good access to all of the above-mentioned services (see Table 3). In regional and local centres, the share of well-serviced population remained the same and the share of so-called "empty" areas increased. The countryside population has experienced significant deterioration in this area, with 2.6% higher

share of the population being without any services. In other words, a lower percentage of the population than ten years ago has access to most communication facilities. The greatest problem in our opinion is the lack of access to public telephones in countryside settlements. In the absence of most other services, the importance of telephone access and public transportation is magnified.

In sum, a general feature of over-all stagnation is the increasingly marked structural imbalances among living places and the growing differences in the social standards of those living in these various areas. As we are talking about the most basic parameters of quality of life and, in a wider sense, about social integration into the modern social organisation, we might argue that an ever greater portion of the Slovenian population has become marginalised in their living environment.

## THE USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IN SLOVENIA

The importance of the development and use of public transportation has been considered one of the keys to sustainable urban organisation in most European countries over the last several decades. It is a factor that contributes enormously to the quality of life in cities without decreasing territorial mobility. There is a strong effort underway to limit the individual use of cars, providing more public space to bicycles and pedestrians. In Slovenia, determining which social groups in different cities use public transportation, with what frequency and for what purpose is a very interesting exercise. In the questionnaire we distributed, we offered three choices: 1) the use of public transportation for everyday commuting to work, 2) the use of public transportation to "go to the city", and 3) the use of the public transportation for the purpose of vacation travel and trips. The most interesting data was revealed in comparing answers from 1984 and 1994. This comparative analysis contains certain methodological inadequacies (for example, the data from 1994 excludes the youngest category - up to 19 years old). Nevertheless, the changes from the previous decade are enormous and the methodological inadequacies do not alter the significance of the study for the whole population.

In Ljubljana and Maribor, 18.3% of the population is regularly using the bus for daily trips to work or to school. In smaller urban centres, the share drops to 10% and in the countryside, to 12.9%. Looking at the three groups together, the countrywide average is 14.1% of the Slovenian population. In 1984, the corresponding figure was 30.9% of the Slovenian population, a clear indication that the share of regular customers of public transport has dropped by one-half over the last ten years. In the year 1994, 68.8% of the inhabitants reported that they never used public transportation to get to work or school and 17.1% do so only occasionally. The numbers for individual types of cities or living places are no more encouraging; in Ljubljana and Maribor, 60.1% of the inhabitants reported that they never use the bus or other public transportation for daily transportation needs. In regional and local centres, the number increases to 70% of the population and in the countryside to 70.5%. As employees and students represent two quite

dominant social groups which are potential customers of public transport, these figures raise problematic questions about national transportation strategies. Stated more emphatically, these numbers announce a coming catastrophe. In many European cities, the development of public transportation strategies are often the focal point for improving the economic and social perspectives of various living environments. The second purpose for use of public transportation in the questionnaire was "to go to the city" and refers to the wide variety of reasons for using it by different social groups. Even in this category, a full 52.9% of the population never uses public transportation. In larger urban centres, the share is 40.1%, in smaller cities, 60% and in countryside settlements, 54.5%. Regular users represent only 11.8% of the total population while, in 1984, the corresponding number was 28.2%. Thus in this segment, we also observe a decrease of over one-half over the last ten years. Occasional use of public transportation was reported by 34% of the countryside population and by 41% of the inhabitants of larger cities. In 1984, the corresponding number was 46.5%.

We presumed that vacation travel also presented an opportunity to use public transport as most of the population occasionally does take vacation. Yet, only 4.7% of the population reported the use of public transport for that purpose while, in 1984, 13.8% reported such use (in larger cities, 7%; in the countryside, 3% and occasional use of public transportation by 11.2% of the population, as whole). Moreover, in 1994, a full 84.2% of the population reported that they never take public transportation when going on their vacations. In 1984, the corresponding number was 68.4%.

Undoubtedly, these figures reveal not only a general trend of stagnation but the complete decay and retreat of the public transportation system from the lives of Slovenia's citizens. Public transportation has become a marginal means of transportation for most of the population in Slovenia. Lacking stronger state support for the public transportation system in this transitional period of development (and such a priority is widely considered an investment for sustainable economic development), the use of private transportation has become predominant. Consequently, Slovenia has become an extremely promising market for car dealers. It is not yet clear whether this is a sign of the automotive industry's lobbying power within the government of Slovenia or whether it is merely the result of the absence of a comprehensive national strategy concerning the use of public transportation. In either case, this clearly represents a marked difference with trends in other European nations and is something that Slovenia will ultimately have to deal with.

A second cause of concern is the lag in the development of inter-city train systems, a result of the state giving priority to road construction. Such inter-city transportation is a basic requirement for the integration of economic and human flows in the new territory of the European Union. The consequences of being left out of those flows will be far-reaching and unpredictable as regards the extent of potential negative effects. Finally, these highly questionable trends in transport development only delay the

coming crisis in infrastructural and transportation systems. In the meantime, they exert a strong effect on the quality of life and the ecological quality of the environment.

## FOOD SUPPLY

The results of the increased supply of food in Slovenian living environments are quite surprising. In this area, we include the availability of ordinary food stores but also restaurants and specialty food supply (of which there are seven types). In this area, private initiative overlapped with that of ordinary inhabitants in terms of where and how to start businesses. Countryside settlements have witnessed the greatest progress in this service area: the share of those with very good food supply increased from 32.7% in 1984 to 45.8% in 1994 (see Table 3). In larger and medium-sized cities, the increase has been negligible as access to food supply was already quite good: from 90.9% to 95.6% of inhabitants have an excellent choice of food in their living environments.

In spite of the general improvement in access to food supply, even in this area we can observe certain critical points of development, particularly in smaller settlements. In these settlements, we have observed an increasing share (of 1.2%, see Table 3) of poorly supplied locations. The regions effected are those which do not have the best position in the framework of the free-market allocation of services. We can only reiterate our concern about the general stagnation which has greatly effected smaller urban units. The principal reason for the stagnation is the collapse of the traditional economy of local centres due to reform and the division of communities into many smaller units without adequate financing.

One conclusion which may be drawn from this data is that, over the last ten years, the government has not had a well-defined or targeted concept of social welfare and market oriented allocation of services. In spite of increased state efficiency, the government has neglected countryside populations and introduced policies which have disproportionately promoted cities. What is most disappointing is the absence of a unified concept and the lack of concern for general welfare. One might also argue that certain data points to the absence of any general vision of development or that the government, with no proper professional analysis of the situation, lacks not only a strategy but also the resources to formulate and implement a strategy. Hardly anyone expects market forces to take over in areas of ecological concern, general provision of health care and education and basic transportation infrastructure. Both forces (the market and the state) seem to be acting in accordance with the same logic: that is, achieving liberal short-term goals while insuring their own survival. Only in the major urban centres of developed regions have social standards been maintained at the same level and, in some service areas, have even been improved. Therefore, both the efforts of the state and the market are directed toward the cities where it is predicted that such investments will be worthwhile. On the other hand, basic services in the countryside have decreased with the exception of certain major gaps in services, such as food supply, which have

improved. There is very little evidence of productive investments outside of clearly commercial enterprises. If we are correct in this assumption, then there will be a continuous shortage in new working places and production. It is also certain that consumption cannot increase indefinitely.

The retreat and rationalisation of state involvement in subsidised services is beginning to show a distinct pattern of selectivity according to living environments, a pattern which has been more damaging to countryside populations than to cities where the service network was already better developed. Although it could be argued that the current level of social standards exceeds the abilities of the state, the reorganisation of the supply of services should be pursued rather than merely opting to close them down.

### WHAT HAVE BEEN THE MAJOR CHANGES IN SLOVENIA OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS?

In Slovenia, the level of social standards, the availability of a complete variety of services, the infrastructural network, - in short, the level of collective consumption - has stagnated or deteriorated over the last ten years. There are only few exceptions to this situation, mostly related to the consumption of goods such as general merchandise and food. It could be argued that such trends make Slovenia less fit for entrance into the European Union and have eliminated the advantages of being a small country. It is precisely improvement in the infrastructure and in the communication network which stimulates further development and attracts investment. Although the introduction of a market economy did have the effect of stimulating entrepreneurship, market forces are not sufficient to improve the quality and availability of many service sectors related to collective consumption. This problem certainly effects areas such as education, health and most communication systems. Without the well-planned allocation of scarce resources, the impact of the transitional period will be very damaging to the general level of social standards.

Among the various types of city settlements in Slovenia, larger urban units have an advantageous position. In developed regions, urban centres have made the most progress even though stagnation has been the general trend. On the other hand, smaller urban centres, such as old regional industrial towns and the numerous centres of the previous communities, have suffered enormously after the promising eighties. The nineties ushered in a period of transition, economic crises, local reorganisation and political change - all of which meant the drastic reduction of previously available resources. As a result, the general level of social standards in these cities has deteriorated. At this point, there are no signs of a new conceptual approach to development which will improve the situation in these particular locations. In sum, the access of different social groups to increasing levels of social standards has been reduced and this has effectually terminated the so-called process of de-elitisation (Dekleva, 1986?) as social differences are once more on the rise.

In the process of increased competition, certain locations have had better opportunities to attract new investments and this is one reason why, regardless of previous suburbanisation flows, metropolitanisation might be the coming trend. This is principally due to the advantages of and potentials for larger market in developed urban areas. The role of the state as it relates to this period of development is constantly being challenged. Nevertheless, national network programmes designed to secure an adequate level of social standards and reduction of the most undesirable consequences of these rapid changes should be attempted. The results of our study certainly raise questions and criticism about the development of the public transportation system and available access to basic services, such as education and health organisations. An adequate planning and development strategy did not follow the spontaneous process of suburbanisation and thus an increased level of socio-ecological problems has effected these areas (such as traffic problems and general social disequilibrium).

Our investigation did not include specific data on suburban areas which would enable us to make direct comparisons with other research results (Ravbar, 1991). In spite of this, it would be difficult to explain the constant level of countryside population over the last decade without taking into account migration flows and changes of social structure. Returning again to general concepts of the cyclical model, it would be expected that suburbanisation would continue in Slovenia. However, it is very likely that migration flows will be directed to the hinterland of developed urban regions rather than to the vicinity around smaller cities as it has been in the past. The process of metropolitanisation, on the other hand, does not necessarily mean massive migrations directed to urban centres but rather the augmentation of indirect urban influence, increasing the political and economic potential of urban conglomeration. The domination of an urban unit within a given region will very likely increase the interconnections of smaller settlements around the urban unit and will thus gather up the smaller settlements within the urban network.

Suburbanisation has had multiple effects on the spatial development of the urban area. It has had an impact on the present and future allocation of resources which again relates to the level of social standards. The state should, therefore, maintain an awareness of such trends and implement adequate strategies in response. In addition, suburbanisation has had the effect of enlarging urban areas, greatly increasing daily commuting and thus creating a need for infrastructural development. It has also modified the existing social structure, the way and quality of life in the settlements around the urban centre and had an impact on the physical identity of effected areas. These are again strong arguments for careful planning and following up on the changes caused by suburbanisation in an effort to enhance the effect of development and investment. The delayed development of suburban locations as regards infrastructure, communications and services is emphasizing the importance of urban centres to an excessive degree and overloading the limited potentials of these urban areas. The delay in development, therefore, also effects the quality of life in the city centre itself. Those decisions which have an impact on the changes and



flows within the larger urban and regional locations are fundamental. Central urban function will have to be reorganised and extended over more marginal locations. It is in this area that local initiatives for development might serve to resuscitate the growth of the region. Our analyses indicate that the problem is more that the reorganisation of existing services which is needed (for example, those relating to mobility and transportation) rather than the establishment of a whole new service infrastructure from scratch. This is certainly the case with the most remote locations in the hinterland and with smaller settlements. There are few alternatives outside of extending the basic infrastructure to follow the movement of populations within the Slovenian territory.

Indeed, the existing infrastructural network is a reasonable starting point and could be extended from urban and regional centres to more distant suburban locations, thus increasing existing systems rather than building new local networks. We have already discussed the problem of overloaded central areas, causing, for example, traffic jams because of increased commuting in private vehicles. Strategically directed planning might decrease the ecological and infrastructural effects of such a chaotic suburban (mobile) development which, at some point, will become irreversible. Sustainable development and ecological concerns enhance the long-term invested technological effects which is an added benefit of the achievement of planned goals. The first consequence of such strategic planning would be a better quality of life and a good base for small private initiative in related entrepreneurial endeavours.

From that perspective, the lack of an adequate public transportation system is of particular concern. The development of a transportation network obviously has not followed the flows and needs of inhabitants during the past decade. The existing transportation system is concentrated only in urban areas and rarely extends into suburban areas to provide service to daily commuters. The preservation of natural goods in the hinterlands, parts of which are now in a rather chaotic process of urbanisation, should also be of special concern to policy makers. The different interests of various social groups (native dwellers, migrants, urban-employed population, recreational visitors and tourists) might well have different relations to and needs from the environment and might try to bend policy to their short-term objectives. What is most evident is the absence of a common vision of development and of community and a lack of local democracy. Various interest groups will continue to pressure the government for additional investments so it will be difficult to avoid some kind of strategic planning. In many fields of social activities, the efforts of the private sector offer a useful alternative when such initiatives are coordinated within national networks. However, in many instances, the state is needed to provide vision and incentives. Moreover, as noted before, spontaneous market entrepreneurship has limited results as regards common social standards and infrastructure development. It is for these reasons that the current accumulation of power in the centralized state is controversial as it cannot or does not want to exercise the necessary power to plan development during this transitional period.

Without a vision for social development within the Slovenian living environment, the present use of natural and social resources will have long-term detrimental effect on the future. Such trends indicate a neglect in utilizing potential local resources and in developing the unequal opportunities in various regions which have an impact on the lives and chances of different generations. The lag in infrastructural development in the countryside is of special concern because of the extent of the suburbanisation process which in the case of Slovenia effects a great part of the territory and nearly one-half of the population.

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