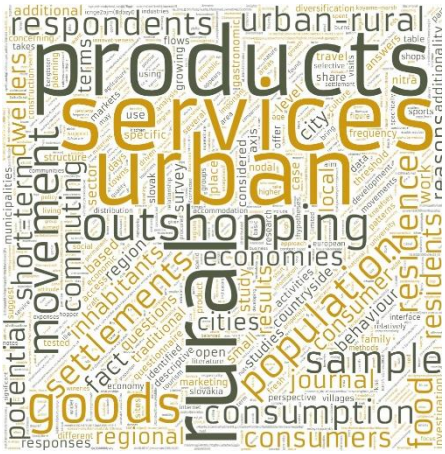
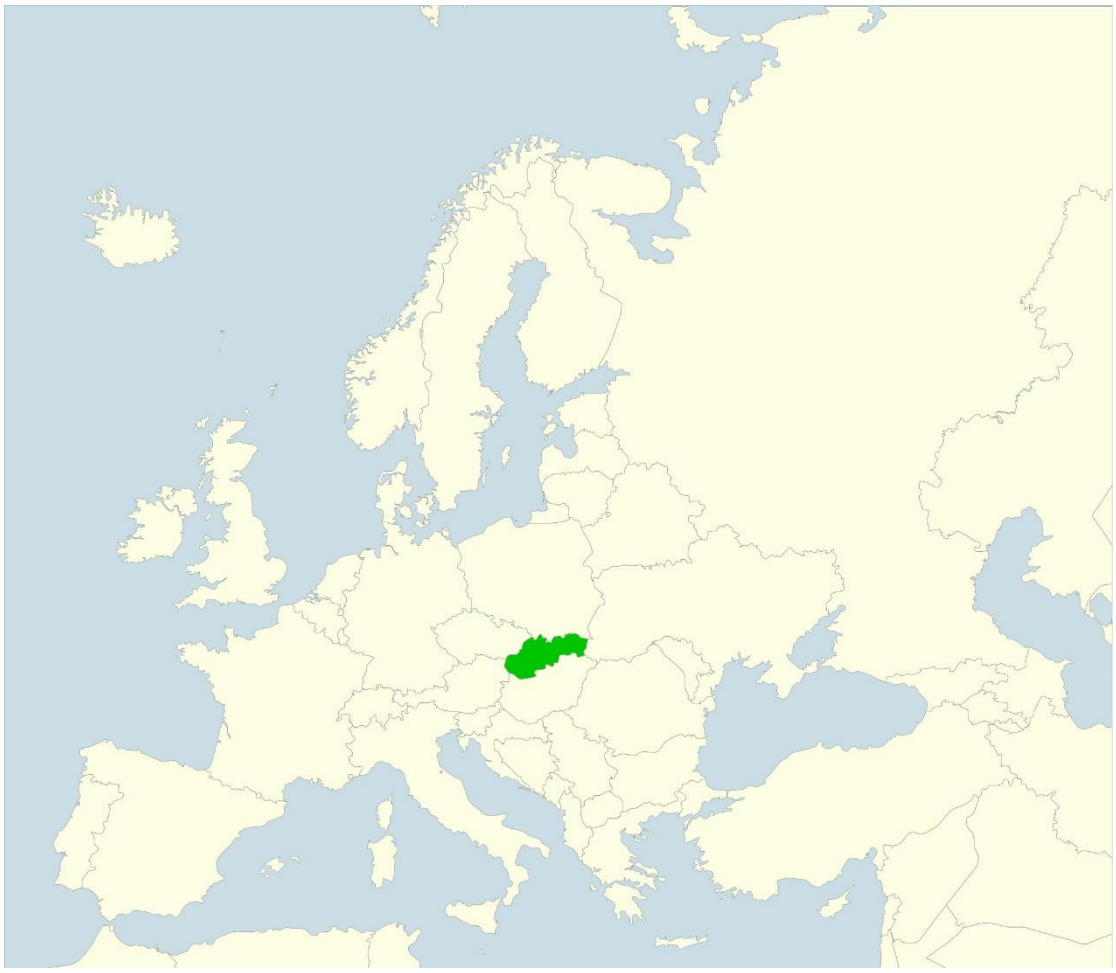
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URBAN OUTSHOPPING IN RURAL SLOVAKIA

Michal Hrivnák, Peter Moritz,
Jana Jarábková[1]





[1] Ing. Michal Hrivnák, Ph.D. (corresponding author), xhrivnak@uniag.sk, ORCID: 0000-0003-2816-7825, Mgr. Peter Moritz, xmoritz@uniag.sk, ORCID: 0000-0002-6110-4466, Doc. Ing. Jana Jarábková, Ph.D., jana.jarabkova@uniag.sk, ORCID: 0000-0003-2419-720X, Slovak University of Agriculture Nitra, Slovakia

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Abstract: Outshopping is consumption behaviour where a consumer leaves the local economy and procures products and services in other local economies. While rural outshopping has been studied in the scientific literature for decades, the consumption structure of urban dwellers in smaller rural settlements has never been precisely mapped. The aim of this study is to understand the basic patterns of urban residents' spending on goods and services in the local economies of small rural settlements, using descriptive methods, comparison and content analysis. Based on the results, we put forward hypotheses that rural outshopping takes place within the nodal region of the city rather than in the wider urban-rural interface, may have a potentially selective character, and the frequency of short-term movement on the city-rural axis may be additional to other dominant intentions for traveling to a rural settlement.

Keywords: short-term population movement, outshopping, rural, urban, consumption

Highlights

- Population of cities spends up to 3.3 times less in rural settlements as vice-versa
- Still urban outshopping represents an opportunity for the growth of rural economies
- Rural economies can attract consumers through fresh food, accommodation, gastronomic services, handcraft products, or the offer in the sector of creative industries and culture
- Urban outshopping is additional to other predominant reasons for short-term movement on the urban-rural axis
- Outshopping takes place mainly within nodal regions
- Urban outshopping is selective in terms of age and education of the urban population

1. Introduction

The volume of literature aimed at examining the flows on the rural-urban axis has been growing further in the last decade. This literature is rather based on an investigation of these flows within the urban-rural interface (Douglass, 1998). Much of urban-rural flows, however, can be observed rather in broader space (Ros-Tonen et al., 2015). Rural-urban linkages are conceptualized as a two-way flow of population (e.g., labour, shoppers), goods and services, public and private services (e.g., health, education, transportation, or repair services), capital (e.g., investment, credit) and information (Douglass, 1998). Flows of material were conceptualized as "urban metabolism", while this concept received a new wave of attention in recent decade (Hajer, 2015). Despite the fact that a part of the flows on the urban-rural axis extends into the global space, many have a place-based nature (Zasada et al., 2013).

The population of the urban areas intensively uses the natural potential of the countryside and its resources – especially soil, minerals, water, and food, and stores waste in rural (Billen et al., 2012). The consumption of these rural resources, however, usually takes place in the city. The population movement on the urban-rural axis does not only involve migration. It consists also of voluminous short-term movements for a wide range of reasons involving commuting, visiting families, tourism, or other movements driven by consumption (Milbourne & Kitchen, 2014). The short-term movement of the population can be understood as temporary mobility connected with a short stay out of the location of residence, usually lasting from one to several days (Taylor, 2007), due to various reasons, including shopping. On the urban-rural axis, it has the highest intensity within the nodal regions, but it is not limited to them (Ros-Tonen et al., 2015). Opportunities for rural development arising from the diverse short-term movement of the urban population to rural settlements are not yet comprehensively mapped (Patel et al., 2015). However, as rural economies also suffer from the point of view of smaller markets and narrow institutional thickness, it can be assumed that the ability of a rural enterprise to attract consumers from an urbanized area can significantly raise its competitiveness (Fáziková et al. 2021). In principle, urban

consumers can be interested in out-shop traditional rural products (Figueiredo et al., 2022), or products and services that are not specific to rural economies, which creates an opportunity for rural enterprises to expand on regional, and national markets (Kiss et al., 2020). Traditional rural products are often described as local, regional, traditional, authentic, gourmet, organic, or craft products (Kneafsey et al., 2017). However, we still lack a mapping of the complex offer of rural economies and rural products demanded by the population living in cities.

The mechanical movement of the population to another area triggered by consumption is often referred to as rural/urban "outshopping" (Piron, 2002; Roy and Goswami, 2007; Broekemier & Burkink, 2004; Patel et al., 2015). It can be defined as consumer behaviour connected with leaving the local retail trade area to get access to a product or a service (Lennon et al., 2009). This consumer behaviour is defined by two main components, namely the frequency of travel and the proportion of expenditure incurred outside the area of residence (Papadopoulos, 1980; Hopper and Budden, 1989). However, this term arose in studies describing this type of consumer behaviour of the population of rural settlements, outshopping in the local economies of cities. Previous studies focused mostly on outshopping of products and services by the rural population in urban spaces despite the fact that these products are also available in the local economy of a particular rural settlement (Tuli & Mookerjee, 2004; Varshney & Goyal, 2006). Several studies have identified the limited selection of goods and services available in the local economy as the main driver of rural outshopping (Lennon et al., 2009). Miller and Kean (1997) suggested that consumers that are not satisfied with their life in a locality are more interested to outshop products and services. It was proved that the frequency of rural outshopping varies in the case of products like groceries, home furnishings, furniture, semi-durables and from products like jewellery, women's fancy dresses and lifestyle services (Hopper & Lipscomb, 1991). Results of Papadopoulos (1980) suggest that outshopping tends to happen rather for specialty products, which could be also a case of urban consumption in rural.

However, it is very difficult to find certain mentions of urban outshopping. One of the few studies is Smith (1999), who found that urban outshopping is driven by dissatisfaction with local markets in the case of urban populations with increased income and higher education. The motivation for outshopping of urban population can also stem from an expectation of an innovative and authentic experience (Burns et al., 1999), or available transport options (MacNell, 2018). In more recent study of Patel et al. (2015), propensity of urban dwellers to out-shop was growing if consumers liked travelling activities. The study pointed to the potential additionality of urban outshopping, as urban dwellers mostly outshopped flooring, sports goods, children's clothing and fancy items while travelled from other reasons. Some insights can bring studies focusing on evaluating the attractiveness of traditional rural products for different population groups. According to Libery and Kneafsey (1998), such traditional products include fresh food, craft services, traditional culture and recreation services.

The aim of this study is to map the patterns of urban outshopping and thus to characterize the structure of urban residents' spending on goods and services in the local economies of rural settlements. A secondary objective is to compare patterns of urban and rural outshopping and to characterize the types of rural goods and services with the potential to increase the volume of financial flows from urban to rural areas through consumption. These patterns will be investigated in the conditions of Slovak Republic, which is an example of the post-socialistic transitional economy (Koyame-Marsh, 2011).

2. Methodology

We will use data from the "Quality of Life Monitor in Rural Areas", distributed by the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, Slovakia. This monitor is a dual questionnaire in its nature, which in one version integrates questions for both residents of small rural settlements under 10,000 inhabitants and at the same time questions for urban residents, i.e., settlements with more than 10,000 inhabitants (these questions are identical – but with different options for closed and semi-closed questions), based on conditional questions.

The questionnaire consisted of 32 questions, of which up to 12 were open-ended questions, 4 were matrices in the form of checkboxes grids, and 16 were closed-ended or semi-closed-ended questions. The questionnaire was distributed during the covid-19 pandemic in an online environment with partial use of the snowball sampling technique. In the first round of distribution, 32 pages on the social network Facebook were identified, which allowed new members to enter freely, while their aim was to bring together the inhabitants of the city or region. These groups were chosen so that we would cover the capital, all regional centres, most district towns and part of rural settlements in all 8 NUTS III regions in Slovakia. In addition to what was described, we asked all LAGs to share and distribute the questionnaire, with the aim of increasing the proportion of responses from small rural villages. At the end of the questionnaire, the call for its sharing on social networks was addressed to individuals. In total, we received 745 responses with an appropriate response rate for the inhabitants of towns and rural settlements (almost 1:1) and responses covering all 8 NUTS III regions in the country. We also used information collected within open questions that were set as optional. However, Figure 3 is still based on the fact that the state of the population over 18 years of age was 4,414,448 adults in 2021 due to SO SR (2021), the sample can be considered statistically significant at the national level (margin of error at the level of 3.48 at 95% confidence level). The questionnaire was distributed through social networks, by identifying 78 groups of citizens on social networks Facebook, which were territorially bound either to a specific city or region. In addition, we took advantage of the questionnaire sharing within the national network of local action groups (CLLD). The survey was conducted between September and December of 2021.

At this point, it is important to justify the choice of a threshold for the population living in cities and rural settlements, set at 10,000 inhabitants. Determining the threshold was a must when compiling the survey, as it was necessary to provide a different version of the questionnaire to residents of rural settlements and cities. Since the survey did not collect information about the location of the individual's residence, we were not able to use the methodology of determining the degree of rurality of the residence based on traditional indicators, such as distance of commuting, population density, or distance from the regional centre. Setting the threshold was an arbitrary decision that did not respect the administrative division of settlements in Slovakia and integrated all settlements with up to 10,000 inhabitants, including small rural towns, into "small rural municipalities". The legislative argument should lead to the use of the threshold of 5,000 inhabitants, which is enshrined in the law as a requirement for the declaration of a municipality as a city by the National Council of the Slovak Republic (still, many cities are below this threshold), but given the fact that rural lifestyle still prevails in small rural towns and the offer of goods and services does not fundamentally differ between bigger villages that in some case cross the level of 5000 inhabitants and small rural towns, we decided to apply a threshold of 10,000 inhabitants.

Our research design is based on descriptive and hypothetical approaches due to the research framework. Thus, we will rather put focus on the formulation of hypotheses than testing. The study utilizes basic descriptive methods (absolute and relative frequencies, scoring methods, averages, contingency tables) and comparison methods in the processing of primary data. Secondary data were using basic descriptive methods. Quantification of information from open responses was performed using the method of selective coding (Holton, 2010) and text mining (Bengtsson, 2016).

3. Results

At the beginning of this part, we first want to describe the sample obtained as part of the survey, which we described in the third section. We managed to obtain a sample of 761 citizens. The sample is relatively balanced from the perspective of key indicators (share of inhabitants with permanent residence below, and over 10 000 inhabitants, but also in terms of gender, age, distribution of respondents between all eight NUTS 3 regions in the Slovak Republic) and mostly copy the actual distribution of the population according to these indicators.

First of all, we considered it important to have a relatively balanced sample with regard to the share of respondents living in settlements with more than 10,000 inhabitants (necessarily considered as urban dwellers in the Slovak Republic) and in settlements under 10,000 inhabitants, which can be understood

as small rural towns and villages in the context of settlement structure in Slovakia. Up to 51.95% of respondents in the sample have a permanent residence in settlements with less than 10,000 inhabitants, while 51.95% of respondents have a residence in settlements with less than 10,000 inhabitants. The sample is also balanced in terms of the share of men (43.36%) and women (56.64%), in terms of age groups, as it is close to the distribution in the population, and in terms of family status (55.57% married and 44.43% single). The structure of the sample according to educational level and NUTS III region of permanent residence does not copy the distribution in the population. In the sample, we have a disproportionately represented population with a university degree (up to 55.43% of respondents), which may be due to the fact that the survey was organized by an academic institution. Similarly, the fact that the survey was initiated by the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra probably influenced the increased share of answers obtained in the Nitra region (up to 26.58% of respondents).

Tab 1. Overview of monthly short-term movements on the urban-rural axis by prevailing reason for movement. Source: own processing

	movement to urban			movement to rural		
Categories	W*	F	C	W	F	C
0 days / month	27.09%	19.38%	7.53%	68.16%	22.22%	17.04%
1–2 days / month	3.80%	26.87%	13.51%	17.04%	45.83%	51.68%
2–5 days / month	5.06%	19.90%	18.70%	4.75%	18.06%	21.51%
5–10 days / month	7.09%	18.60%	28.31%	3.91%	6.94%	6.42%
10–20 days / month	12.41%	11.37%	21.82%	1.96%	4.44%	2.51%
20–31 days / month	44.56%	3.88%	10.13%	4.19%	2.50%	0.84%

* W (commuting to work), F (movement in order to visit family), C (movement for consumption)

Concerning the results of the investigation of short-term population movement on the rural-urban axis, these flows are more frequent in the rural-urban direction than the urban-rural in the sample (Table 1). The only exception is movement due to a family visit. However, even in this case, it was found that a higher proportion of urban dwellers travel to the family in the countryside, but these movements are relatively sporadic (high values mainly in the categories of movement 1–2 days or 2–5 days a month). Concerning the rural-urban population movement due to family visits, a higher level of mobility was recorded in the intervals of highly frequent movement (5–20 days per month). This trend may be linked to the fact that family visits can often be associated with the intention to shop – thus consume products and services in the city. Residents of rural settlements travel to cities significantly more often due to commuting to work as well as due to consumption. But still, we identified that a high share (up to 73.19%) of urban respondents travel to the countryside due to consumption, but far less often (mostly from one to five days a month). This information requires more detailed elaboration based on levels of spending.

The results of the survey confirm the logical assumption that individuals with residence in rural settlements have a significantly higher share of spending on goods and services in the urban economy than vice-versa. According to the results of the survey, the average nominal monthly wage of inhabitants of rural settlements reached 949.61 €, while the average nominal monthly wage of city residents reached the amount of 1329.75 €. The average amount of the total, monthly volume of outshopping by residents of rural settlements in cities was 421.42 € (44.38% of the average wage) and in the case of outshopping by residents of cities in rural settlements, the amount was 178.81 € (13.44%).

The results in Table 2 show that the volume of urban outshopping in the countryside is not highly differentiated according to the characteristics of sex, age, educational level, size of the residence, or it is not significantly differentiated regionally. Based on the results displayed in Table 2, we could formulate an hypothesis that both urban and rural outshopping increases with the level of education, is slightly increased in the case of middle age categories and really only very slightly increased in the case of men. The share of spending by urban residents on goods and services in the countryside is significantly higher in the 50–65 age group compared to the 18–30 age group. It is also possible to assume that the volume

of urban outshopping is increased in the case of residents of regional centres (51,000–120,000 citizens) and comparatively significantly lower in the case of residents of the capital Bratislava. Conversely, rural outshopping appears to grow as the size of the rural settlement decreases. Otherwise, we do not see certain visible spatial patterns in urban outshopping, for example, from perspective of NUTS 2 regions.

Tab 2. Annual expenditures of urban residents on the consumption of goods and services in the rural settlements by sex, age, level of education, municipality of residence size groups and NUTS III region. Source: own processing

		rural outshopping	**urban outshopping**	**share of urban outshopping on avg. wage****
sex	women	398.63	104.34	11.35%
	men	479.53	115.23	10.53%
age groups	18–30	399.33	82.09	9.00%
	30–50	482.47	113.34	10.77%
	50–65	387.91	124.30	13.32%
	65+	246.07	78.44	12.54%
level of education	secondary without diploma	313.07	88.39	12.02%
	secondary with diploma	426.33	92.75	10.54%
	university I + II. degree	437.82	114.02	11.17%
	university III. degree	495.10	116.90	9.09%
municipality of residence size groups	0–500 citizens	499.87		
	501–1 000 citizens	457.53		
	1 001–2 000 citizens	437.94		
	2 001–5 000 citizens	390.28		
	5 001–10 000 citizens	378.47		
	10 001–25 000 citizens		111.77	12.17%
	25 001–50 000 citizens		126.92	6.58%
	51 000–120 000 citizens		105.61	15.31%
	120 000+ citizens		90.90	5.19%
NUTS III region	Banská Bystrica	369.54	115.50	10.61%
	Bratislava	499.50	107.66	9.91%
	Košice	336.47	107.25	12.45%
	Nitra	502.75	106.61	11.17%
	Prešov	306.05	121.88	11.80%
	Trenčín	432.52	94.64	9.07%
	Trnava	524.48	112.80	12.50%
	Žilina	378.42	96.79	11.33%

*calculated based on midpoints of expenditures intervals in case of given groups of products including "others"

In Figures 1 and 2, we observe the relationship between the frequency of short-term movement of city dwellers to small rural communities for the reasons of (1) commuting to work (regular or irregular), or visiting the family, and the share of wages spent on goods and services in rural municipalities. The results indicate that the consumption of goods and services in small rural municipalities by the urban population can be, to a certain extent, additional to other reasons for traveling. However, the degree of these dependencies expressed by the linear function in the graphs above points to the fact that this additionality is far from essential and there is a high level of purposeful movements caused solely by consumption reasons, which was already indicated by the results in Table 1. However, the pattern of additionality appears to be slightly higher in the case of the growing frequency of short-term movement to rural settlements due to commuting to work.

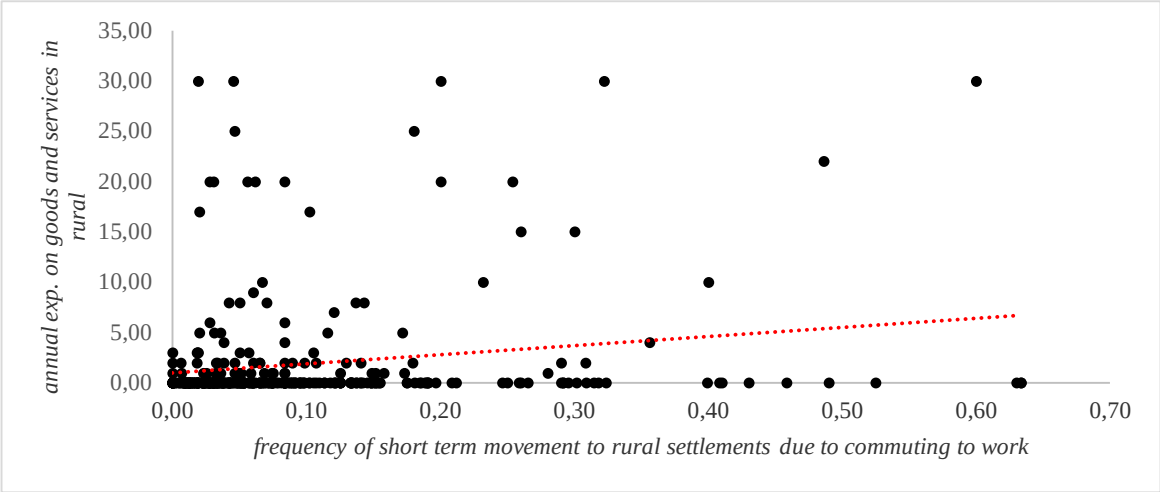


Fig 1. Relationship between commuting to work and urban outshopping. Source: own processing



Fig 2. Relationship between short term movement to visit family and urban outshopping. Source: own processing

In Table 3, we provide information on the structure of urban population consumption in rural settlements. Results are only associated with movement and travel to a rural location. Therefore, the results do not reflect certain additional opportunities for rural resulting from the consumption of e-services, or the purchase of goods through e-shops by the urban population. Table 3 represents an overview of the average annual consumption expressed in intervals.

The number of products identified in the closed questions (predefined categories) as well as in the open questions is relatively wide, but the list of these products is highly dominated by fresh food, accommodation and other tourism services, craft products and products and services in the sector of culture.

Gastronomy and tourism services have a dominant position in the structure of urban outshopping in rural settlements. Up to 80.18% of urban dwellers move to small rural municipalities during the year to consume gastronomic services, and 61.45% travel to these settlements in order to stay several days and use accommodation-related services. Up to 36.87% of respondents in the sample who had a permanent residence in a city spend up to 100 € a year on services of gastronomic facilities. Up to 5.87% of respondents of cities still spend annually from 500–1000 € on the services of gastronomic facilities. Rural accommodation is similarly a significant source of capital flows from urban to rural areas, as similarly, 5.59% of respondents spend annually 500–1000 € on accommodation. We also identified relatively high

costs (with respect to averages in individual categories) related to hiking, which mainly represented paid entrance fees for tolled routes, expenses for cable cars, services connected with skiing, horseback riding, use of boat transport and the like. These results document the significant potential of tourism and gastronomic tourism for rural development in the conditions of the post-socialist economy.

Tab 3. The structure of urban outshopping in small rural municipalities. Source: own processing

	0 €	**1–100 €**	**100–300 €**	**300–500 €**	**500–1 000 €**	**1 000–2 000 €**	**2 000–5 000 €**	**m. than 5 000 €**
purchase of craft products	49.99%	40.78%	6.15%	1.96%	1.12%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
purchase of local food (e.g., fresh meat, milk)	28.76%	42.46%	16.76%	5.87%	2.79%	1.96%	0.00%	1.40%
purchase of building materials	74.02%	10.89%	8.10%	3.91%	1.68%	1.40%	0.00%	0.00%
local alcohol, tobacco,	88.26%	1.12%	8.10%	1.40%	1.12%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
rural accommodation	38.55%	18.44%	24.02%	10.61%	5.59%	2.51%	0.28%	0.00%
gastronomy services	19.82%	36.87%	25.14%	10.34%	5.87%	1.96%	0.00%	0.00%
costs connected with hiking in nature	25.69%	43.30%	20.95%	10.06%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
cultural events and cultural facilities	31.84%	45.53%	15.36%	5.31%	1.40%	0.56%	0.00%	0.00%
rental of land, real estate and upkeep of cabins	86.03%	4.75%	4.75%	2.23%	1.40%	0.84%	0.00%	0.00%
purchase of feed, materials for agriculture and veterinary services	85.75%	9.78%	3.35%	0.56%	0.00%	0.56%	0.00%	0.00%
shops with other miscellaneous goods and other services	54.47%	31.84%	8.10%	3.35%	1.68%	0.56%	0.00%	0.00%
education, workshops, seminars	82.68%	10.89%	4.19%	1.40%	0.84%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
health services	71.78%	16.48%	7.26%	1.96%	1.68%	0.84%	0.00%	0.00%
Other	83.23%	8.94%	4.75%	1.68%	1.12%	0.00%	0.28%	0.00%

A positive finding is that more than 71% of respondents move to the countryside during the year also for the consumption of fresh food, while almost 5% of respondents spend 500–2000 € annually on these food categories. Up to 8.10% of respondents spend annually from 100 to 300 € on alcohol and tobacco. We also noticed a high proportion of respondents who buy handicraft products in the countryside, but most of them can be considered as small handicraft products, as up to 40.78% of respondents spend annually only 100 € on products of this group. We were particularly interested in the results for common miscellaneous goods (specified in the following chapter), which are procured in rural municipalities by up to 55.13% of respondents. However, only 8.10% of urban respondents in the sample spend on various goods procured in rural municipalities from at least 100–300 €. An opportunity for the development of

rural economies is also the potential growth of educational or health-related economic activities, but these do not dominate in the identified structure of consumption, probably due to their low availability in excluded and rural settlements.

Tab 4. The structure of rural outshopping in cities. Source: own processing

	0 €	**1–300 €**	**300–600 €**	**600–1200 €**	**1200–3600 €**	**3600–6000 €**	**6000–12000 €**	**more than 12 000 €**
food in supermarkets	0.78%	6.98%	17.57%	14.73%	23.77%	**27.91%**	3.88%	0.00%
housewares and materials	24.81%	20.41%	20.41%	14.21%	7.75%	1.55%	0.00%	0.00%
basic life needs (pharmacies, drugstores)	2.33%	23.00%	37.21%	22.22%	7.75%	1.81%	0.00%	0.00%
transport tickets and fuel	2.33%	16.80%	27.13%	25.32%	17.83%	4.13%	1.29%	0.00%
goods and services other than basic life needs (clothing, books, printing, jewellery, etc.)	6.20%	31.78%	28.68%	19.12%	7.49%	1.03%	0.78%	0.00%
overnight stays in accommodation facilities	77.26%	7.75%	2.58%	2.58%	2.33%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
services of cafes, bars, pubs	35.92%	34.11%	18.86%	3.62%	1.81%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
cultural services (events, concerts, theatres, cinema, etc.)	40.31%	38.50%	12.66%	2.07%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
lifestyle services (hair salons, gyms, fitness centres, etc.)	32.56%	39.28%	17.57%	4.13%	1.03%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
costs associated with education	56.33%	16.80%	11.11%	5.94%	2.07%	1.81%	0.00%	0.00%
health services	24.55%	44.19%	20.67%	4.91%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
visits of public administration offices and fees	47.29%	15.76%	7.75%	2.58%	1.03%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Thus, the majority of the residents of the cities in the sample participate in the urban outshopping of goods and services in the countryside, but mainly in the categories of expenses from 1–100 and from 100–300 euros per year. Therefore, the level of expenditure of the urban population in rural is relatively low in terms of the level of spending and its impact on the development of rural economies can be of higher significance in the case of localities that can be considered as tourism centres, traditional cultural sites,

sites with a concentration of food producers and sites with high availability of organic food, or a few examples of municipalities offering difficult-to-access products and services.

For the purpose of comparison, the structure of rural outshopping in the sample is also evaluated. The results fully reflect the fact that rural outshopping in the sample is 3.2 times higher on average than urban outshopping. This difference is even deeper in the case of food consumption. The average individual in the sample with a permanent residence in a small rural residence spends annually on average up to 4,188 € on fresh food in the city, while in the case of urban outshopping, it is an average of 320.4 €. In the other categories in Table 4, the shares of expenses are not so significant, but the considerable breadth of this consumption must also be taken into account. The population of rural settlements in the sample spends annually between 300 and 600 € on the purchase of basic needs other than food – especially pharmacies and drugstores (37.21%), on traveling and fuel (27.13%), and on common needs, such as clothing, books and print, jewellery and equivalent (28.6%). From 30 to 50% of respondents with residence in rural settlements spend annually from 100 to 300 € on goods and services in the field of health, culture, entertainment and beautification. In addition to food spending, increased consumption in the city was also identified due to transport costs, as 17.83% of residents of rural settlements spend in cities between 1,200 and 3,600 euros per year on travel and fuel.

The results of the survey also provided an even more detailed structure of expenses in the framework of urban outshopping at the level of specific goods and services. Respondents were asked to specify the specific products and services they had procured in the countryside over the last 3 years in open questions. Using the technique of selective coding, we quantified the share of respondents who procured individual goods and services in the countryside and we showed the results in Figure 3. The results correlate with the data shown in Table no. 5.

After classifying individual products into clusters, it can be stated that the population of cities most significantly spends their funds on the consumption of tourism, culture and sports services, as up to 79.44% of respondents in the sample with permanent residence in the city gained access to a certain service in this group in rural. Also, up to 51.61% of the urban population gains access to fresh food and healthy products in the countryside, 35.82% of respondents procured handicraft products in the countryside and 13.75% of the population procured materials for construction or services in construction.

Using these data allows us to suggest, which products and services can be considered as perspectives for the growth of rural economies due to urban population consumption. The characteristic products of rural economies can be considered food and agricultural primary products, plants and handicrafts (especially furniture, wooden products and household goods), rural catering services, rural accommodation, services of recreational facilities and sports grounds (especially ski lifts), health services, or services associated with traditional culture and its elements. From the perspective of urban outshopping, building materials, which can be expected to be often procured in the rural, can no longer be considered a traditional rural product. Even if the raw materials have been mined/processed in a concrete rural region, inhabitants of that region still need to buy materials for the construction in the city. With the progress of rural economies diversification, the development of services and some activities in the quaternary sector can be observed in rural. The problem seems to be that many of these products and services no longer have a competitive advantage in quality over their urban equivalents and therefore their consumption by rural-urban dwellers is not significant. These are, for example, basic activities in the ICT sector, such as providing access to the internet or the cloud, creating websites, or developing applications, sales of machinery and electronics produced by rural enterprises, legal, economic, marketing services, etc. New activities in the rural that have greater potential for consumption by urban dwellers include products and services in cosmetics, barber shops, alternative medicine, coffee roasters, modern wineries, craft breweries, arts, festivals and other miscellaneous goods characteristic by uniqueness and innovativeness. As study map short-term movements connected with consumption, we ignored consumption triggered by e-shops, which can be considered as important tool to bring the seller closer to the distant markets, and that are often used to shop in rural due to several open answers.

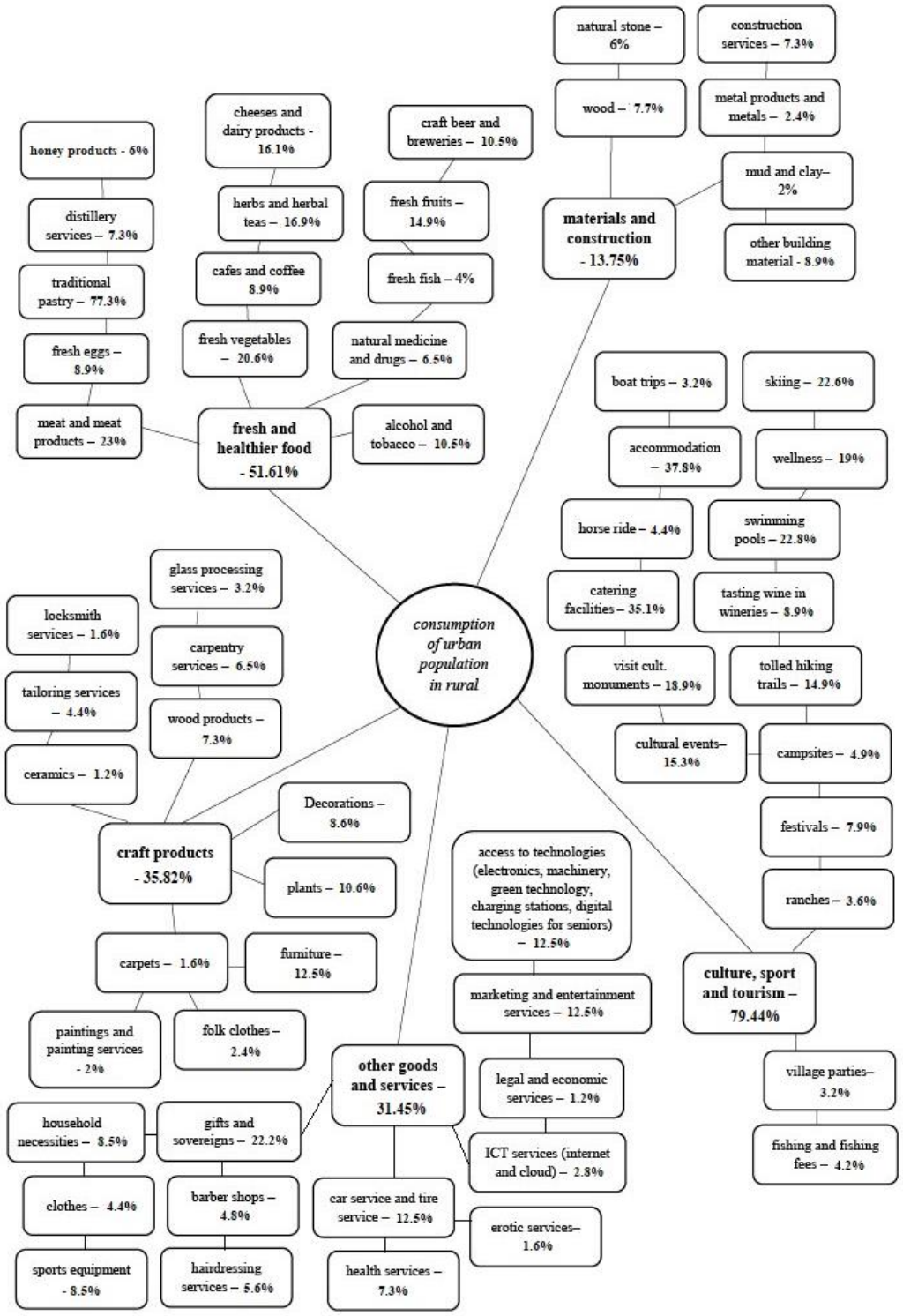


Fig 3. Consumption of specific goods and services in the countryside. Source: own processing

Finally, certain data on the reasons for the consumption of the given goods and services in the countryside and specific notes are also available, thanks to an additional open question. We managed to get only 78 open answers, but it is still possible to provide some certain remarks based on them. Concerning the motivation for urban outshopping, respondents (52.6%) stated that they procured goods and services otherwise not available in city of residence, some (39.7%) have a positive attitude towards rural products due to the expectation of high quality, natural properties, or authenticity, others (20.5%) preferred to shop directly from the producer, and some (14.1%) needed to procure a tailor-made product. Up to 12.8% of this sample highlighted also the already mentioned additionality of urban outshopping to visits of

families, commuting to work, or due to trespassing. Very important are notes of 37.18% of the sample, while these respondents in various forms declare, that urban outshopping mostly takes place rather on shorter distances, thus within the nodal region of the city.

4. Discussion

The results of the study bring relatively comprehensive knowledge of patterns of urban outshopping in the rural, as proposed by Patel et al., (2015). The conclusions are relevant from a managerial perspective, but also from a planning and policy perspective. The main aim was to investigate the dynamics of urban outshopping and consumer behaviour, to unhide the economic activities in the rural that are competitive within the urban-rural interface. In this context, urban outshopping has the potential to support the transformation and diversification of declining rural economies (Figueiredo et al., 2022; Kneafsey et al., 2017).

Short-term population movements on the urban-rural axis (Milbourne & Kitchen, 2014) are the most frequently driven by consumption. This is mainly due to the fact that there is a certain degree of additionality of urban outshopping in rural to the commuting, family visits, or the organization of trips to the countryside. We found potential indications of a positive relationship between commuting, or family visits and urban outshopping, which, however, have to be tested within researches utilizing the deductive approach. We also identified a slightly increased tendency of urban outshopping in the case of educated people, people with a higher income, age group 50–65, which, however, requires analytical testing.

Our results also support the hypothesis of Ros-Tonen et al. (2015), who suggested that rural outshopping take place mainly within the nodal region. This appears to be true also in the case of urban outshopping that can be potentially also limited by travel costs. Up to 83% of survey respondents living in the city travel monthly to the countryside predominantly for the purpose of consuming goods and services. However, it is important to add that up to 52% of urban residents travel to the countryside for consumption 1–2 times a month. Concerning the proportion of expenditures spent outside the area of residence, the urban population spends in rural settlements in average 13.44% of wage, while we can confirm the assumptions of other authors (Papadopoulos, 1980) that rural outshopping is associated with a higher share of expenses (44.38% of wage in average). Lennon et al. (2009) identified that the main motive of rural outshopping is a low offer of goods and services available in the local economy, similar to the conclusions of Smith (1999) that found urban outshopping to be mainly driven by dissatisfaction with local markets. According to the results of the survey, some products and services indeed can be considered as traditionally rural and often unavailable in local economies of cities. Therefore, the lack of access to products and services can also be a source of urban outshopping. But there are also other, specific motives for urban outshopping. We found some support in open question answers in the sample for the results of Patel et al. (2021), that propensity towards outshopping was growing if urban dwellers liked to spend time exploring rural areas. Urban outshopping is further driven by an expectation of high quality and authenticity of rural products, the consumer's attitude towards maximizing the level of purchases directly from producers, or intentions to procure a tailor-made product.

The identified structure of key rural products and services for urban outshopping correlates with previous results. As identified by Libery and Kneafsey (1998), among the key products and services of the rural businesses attractive to urban outshoppers are mainly tourism-related services and specifically, gastronomic services, procurement of fresh food and handicraft products. The highest share of expenditures was recorded in the case of gastronomic services and accommodation. Among the examples of activities that are developing both in urban and rural economies we included: activities in the ICT sector, such as providing access to the internet or the cloud, creating websites, or developing applications, sales of machinery and electronics, legal, economic, marketing services, barber shops, cosmetics, alternative medicine, coffee roasters, modern wineries, craft breweries, arts, festivals and other miscellaneous goods characteristic by uniqueness and innovativeness, that is often a requirement of urban outshopping.

Urban outshopping appears to be mainly a phenomenon taking place within nodal regions (Douglass, 1998). In line with Kiss et al. (2020), it appears that one of the main positive impacts of urban outshopping is that it improves the access of rural businesses to larger and more distant markets.

Concerning propositions for further research, several hypotheses raised by our empirical study need to be tested (role of proximity between city and rural markets, potential selective nature of outshopping, several potential drivers). In particular, we would consider it useful to focus on further studies on the investigation of serendipitous aspects of urban outshopping. We also want to encourage research aimed at identifying and examining the determinants of innovative business and innovative product emergence in rural areas based on the use of endogenous potential and specific inputs of rural economies. Changes in the dynamics of rural economy shifts in terms of diversification and emergence of new activities are not sufficiently compared even between EU countries.

Study results are limited in the hypothetical approach. The descriptive results were summarized and only the hypotheses to be tested were formulated. The evaluation of the expenditure structure is affected by the use of interval evaluation. Certain limitations result from the fact that the survey did not collect data on the proximity between the residence and the place of consumption and did not specifically examine a specific group of goods and services. Also, it was not possible to bring a more fruitful comparison due to the absence of studies on the topic. However, the biggest limitation is the division of respondents into those living in cities and in rural settlements based on an arbitrary threshold.

5. Conclusion

Urban outshopping is an underrepresented topic in the scientific literature, while this descriptive study pointed out the potential economic impacts of consumption by urban dwellers in rural settlements on the development of low-density economies via investigation of consumption patterns. Based on the results of the descriptive analysis and the interpretation of the open responses within the survey data, we formulate hypotheses that urban outshopping takes place within the nodal region of the city rather than in the wider urban-rural interface, may have a potentially selective nature, and the frequency of short-term movement on the city-rural axis may be additional to other dominant intentions for traveling to a rural settlement. Rural economies can attract consumers from the city mainly because of the offer of fresh food, accommodation, gastronomic services, other services in the tourism industry, handcraft products, or the offer of creative industries and culture. However, residents of rural settlements spend up to 3.3 times more in cities than residents of cities in rural settlements. These results can be helpful both for planners and policy practitioners and rural enterprises planning the sale and marketing strategies.

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