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Introduction. The main challenge of the 21st century is to create economic, social, and environmental management mechanisms that would ensure current and future human well-being. The benefits or harms of external and internal consequences for the viability of ecosystems are revealed through the impact on the quality of human life. The issues of assessing these benefits or harms are significant for the whole society and are therefore analyzed from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

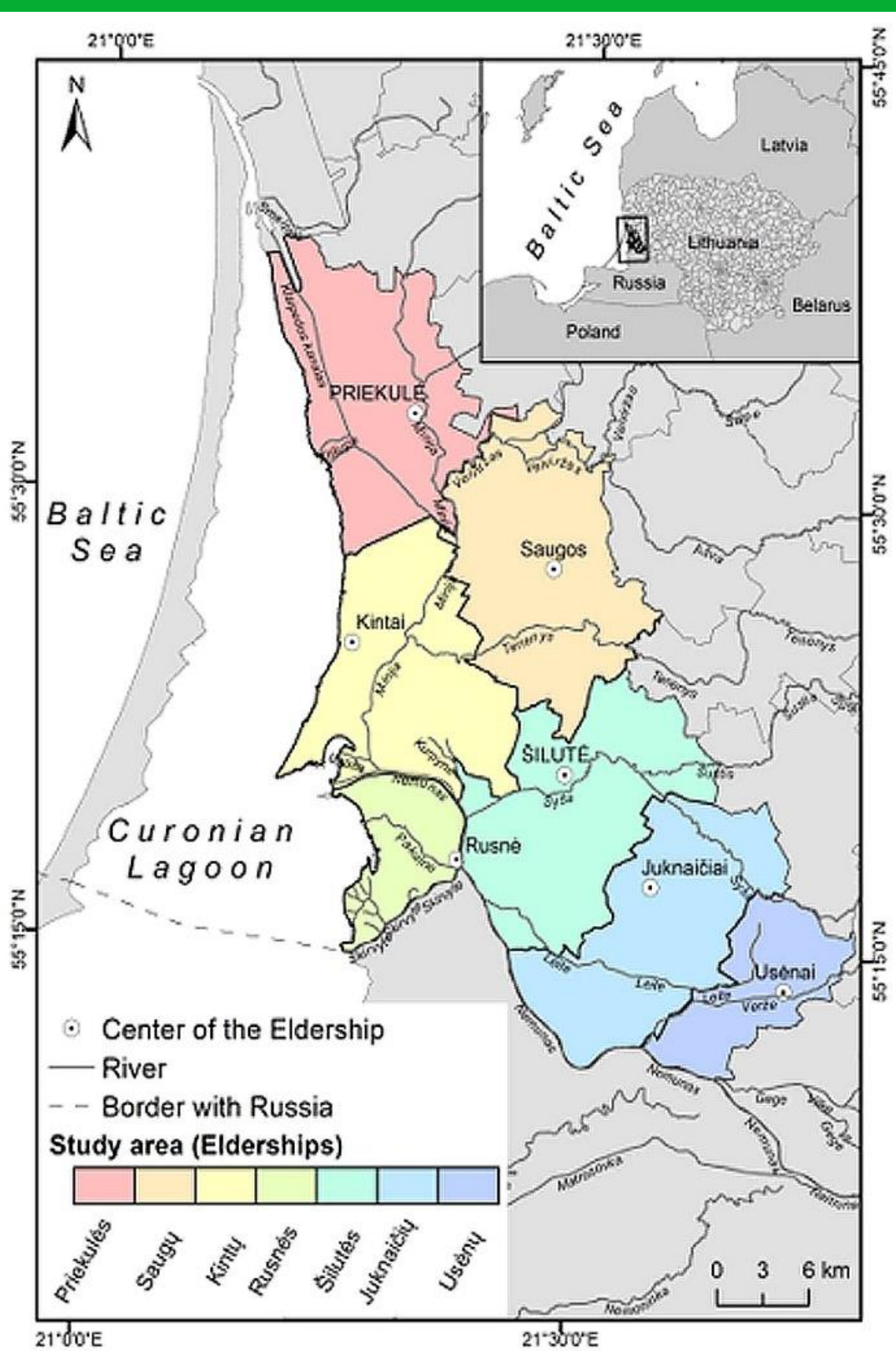


Fig. 1. Distribution of CES potential in the study (distribution map made by J. Mezine).

Materials and methods. The study theoretically examined the coherence between humans and ecosystems, ensuring the social and economic well-being of present and future generations in the context of cultural ecosystem services (CES). The empirical research, carried out on the possibilities of adapting human activities to CES in the specific area, i.e., coastal-rural area, evaluated the past, present and future CES potential in the Lithuanian coastal zone, Nemunas Delta and Curonian Lagoon in Lithuania. Elderships located near the Curonian Lagoon or within the protected area of the Nemunas Delta Regional Park were selected for the study. For this purpose, the empirical study involved representatives of different (public and private) sectors and stakeholders. The research was carried out in local tourism cultural centers and elderships with four group respondents (tourists, farmers, entrepreneurs, eldership employees).

Results. The research revealed the past and the current situation of CES potential and showed the possible CES potential future development directions. The article described the opportunities for the rural population (a potential supply of cultural ecosystems) to achieve diversification of economic activities and the needs of tourists (a potential demand for cultural ecosystems) to achieve service differentiation. Therefore, the recommendations have been formulated on how to exploit future CES of a specific territory by “employing” available natural resources, i.e., the eco-systems.

Conclusions. The research showed that, based on the opinion of the eldership employees, the strongest future intensity is seen almost on all suggested types of supply services (except the provision of recreational fishing opportunities and religious significance). Based on the opinion of tourists, the strongest future intensity was found on five suggested types of supply services (except the provision of recreational fishing opportunities, provision of material for research and cognition, and religious significance). Based on the opinion of farmers and entrepreneurs, the strongest future intensity is seen only in two suggested types of supply services (provision of nature and ecological tourism, cognitive excursions, wildlife, observation, cognition service, and provision of recreation and nature recreation).

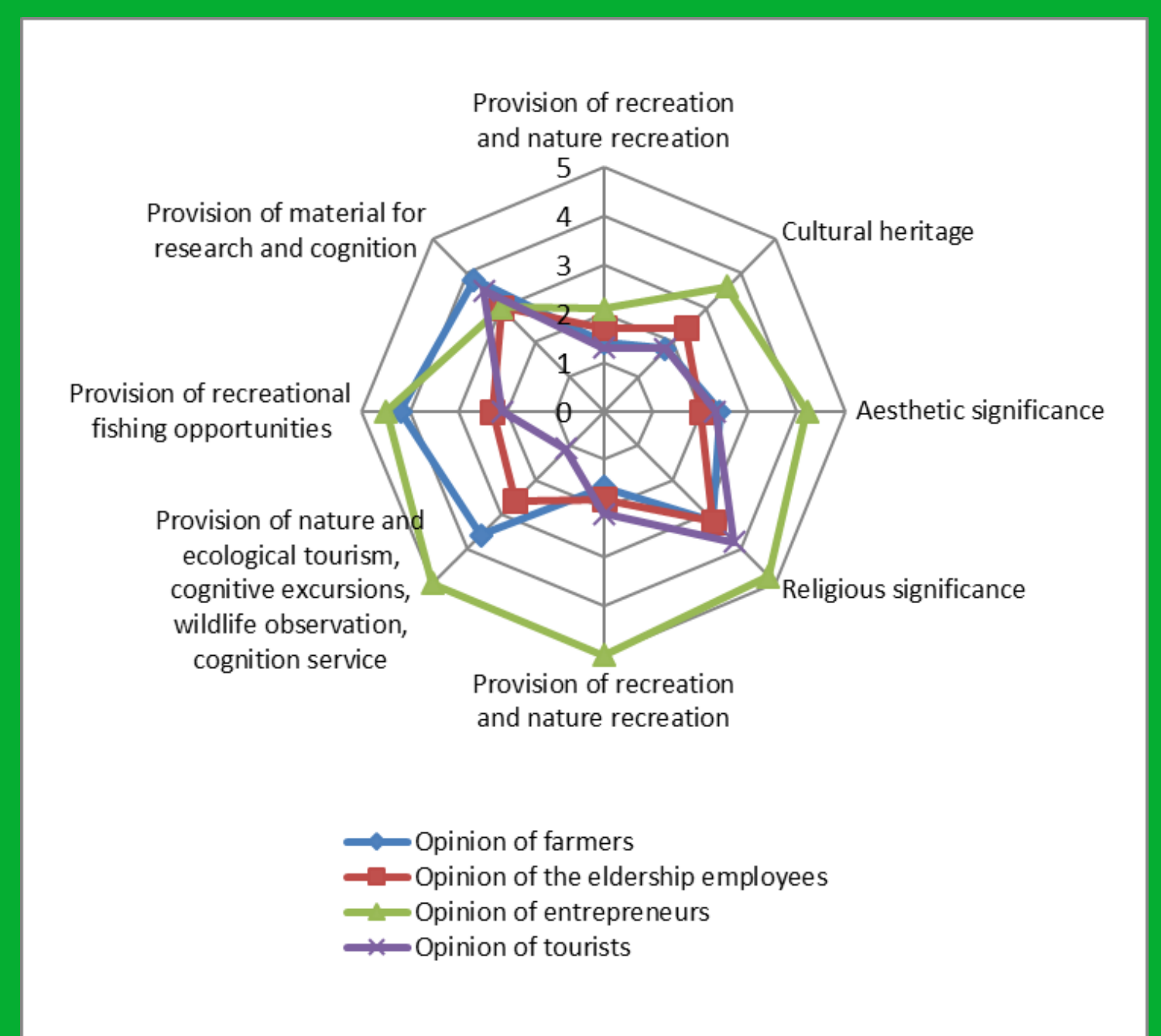


Fig.2. Respondents' views on the future (2020–2030) potential of supply CES, in score averages.

