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## LIFE QUALITY AND STANDARD OF CRACOW SUBURBS INHABITANTS

*Abstract:* in her paper the author discusses problems concerning life quality and standard of the urban population, on an example of Cracow suburbs. Valuation of those – in selected suburbs – was made by an analysis of the measurable objective indices defining an economic status of the discussed population. Aspects concerning the subjective valuation of the life quality, describing the social structure, were also used. A combination of both the objective (material) indices and the subjective (reflecting the feelings of interviewed people) let to obtain full image of the researched social groups and to define a degree of satisfaction of their material and spiritual needs

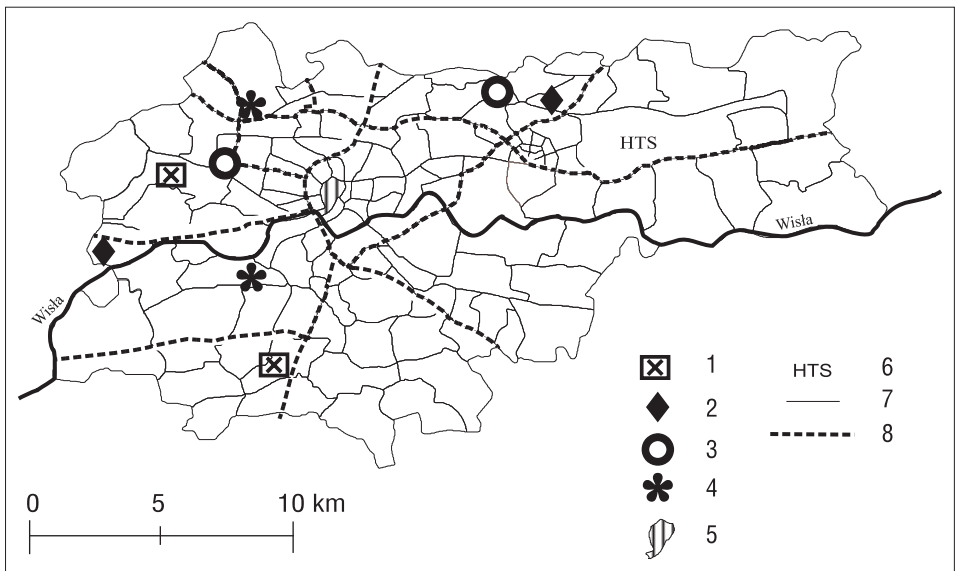
*Key words:* life standard, life quality, City of Cracow, suburbs.

The highly developed countries have reached more advanced urbanisation stages, that of suburbanisation included, mostly due to their considerable economic level. The great urban agglomerations, and even the medium cities in Western Europe, Japan, Australia and especially in the United States, are surrounded by vast suburbs. In those cities a phenomenon more and more visible is that of gentrification, typical for the reurbanisation stage (Brun, Fagnani 1994; Morrison, McMurray 1999). In the Central-Eastern Europe an intensive development of the unifamilial building has been observed since the eve of the 90s. These are both the modest terrace buildings and the great villas – built mainly in the great cities (Kok, Kovács, 1999; Harth, Herlyn, Scheller 1998). The fast changes in the South Eastern European agglomerations, the spatial, functional and social ones, occurred during the phase of political transition in the 90s are reflected in the new organisation of the urban space, in dwelling and in the social stratification.

In post-war Cracow the first unifamilial housing estates showing the suburb features appeared in the 50s, the next ones were built in successive decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> c., but the growth of the population number within the whole Cracow urban region was caused mostly by an inflow to new complexes of the flat blocks, because there were restrictions limiting the unifamilial building development. Those restrictions disappeared after 1989, together with the centrally managed economy, thus the society of Poland began

to be more and more differentiated in its wealth and socio-professional status. Areas the most attractive from the ecological point of view and well linked with the rest of the city began to be built-up, according to the needs of the expansive social groups (Więclaw 1999).

The author's research, made in 1996-99 (partially presented in this paper) concerned 20 of more than 30 Cracow suburbs, lying within the administrative area of this city or close to its boundaries. The investigation refers to 20-69% houses of those estates and to 5-20% of their inhabitants. The discussed suburbs were divided by periods of completing of most of the houses inhabited by the interviewed people. The author chose some suburbs built in the 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s. (Fig.1). She dealt also with demographical and social structures of this population, because they are different from those of the whole city and the particular zones of the Cracow urban region, and the demographic-social features define considerably the valuation of various spheres of their inhabitants life. Among them dominate those in age 40-50, 50-60 and 30-40 years (29%, 21% and 20% respectively), showing rather high education level (the share of university graduates exceeds 60%). As regards the legal status, nearly 85% are married, and the most popular family type is that of the full family (parents with children).



1-4 suburbs built in: 1. 60s, 2. 70s, 3. 80s, 4. 90s; 5. historical core; 6. T. Sendzimir Steelworks; 7. town planning unit boundaries; 8. main street and roads

1-4 osiedla budowane w latach : 1. 60., 2. 70. , 3. 80., 4. 90.; 5. centrum historyczne; 6. Huta im. T. Sendzimira; 7. granice jednostek urbanistycznych; 8. główne ulice i drogi

Fig. 1. Site of suburbs in Cracow

Ryc. 1. Położenie osiedli o cechach suburbanicznych w Krakowie

Source: Author's research.

To undertake her investigation in Cracow suburbs, the author tried to define the life quality and standard of their population. Although this problem has been dealt in many countries since the 20s of the 20<sup>th</sup> c., a scope of such the investigations, their aims and even definitions of “life standard” and “life quality” are different, depending on the given author’s attempt – and the discipline he/she represents. C. Bywalec (1986) in his analysis of the life standard notion wrote, that “in 1962 French economist G. Dupuitgrenet -Desroussilles mentioned that there were some 250 definition of this term”. During next 40 years definition number even grew, moreover their content changed considerably. The term of “life quality” refers to other contents. Formerly only the objective (quantitative) indices were considered, i.e. those describing the economic status of population, access to various goods, then those concerning other life spheres, like health, education, ecological conditions, safety, were included. The quantitative indices used in works on life standard are differentiated, to cover many human needs. A set of features satisfying those needs, after Polish authors representing various disciplines, was presented by T. Słaby (1994) – Table 1.

In the analyses made by Central Statistical Office in Poland (GUS) several hundred social indices are used. In 1991 they were classified into 14 problem groups, referring to the basic spheres of Polish society life, although problems of social pathology, socio-political activity and the unemployment were omitted (Słaby 1994). In the GUS

Tab. 1. Need types in some Polish investigations on life standard

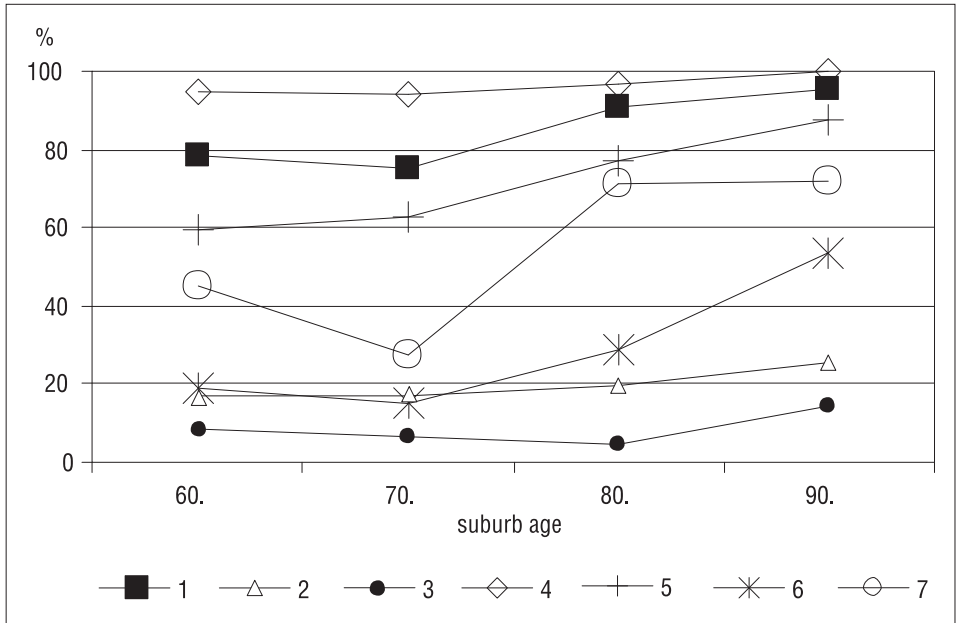
Tab. 1. Rodzaje potrzeb w polskich badaniach poziomu życia

Luszniewicz (1961)	Zienkowski (1979)	Przeciszewski (1983)	Luszniewicz et al. (1985)	Chojnicki, Czyż (1978)
1. dwelling aconditions 2. material status 3. cultural activity 4. health 5. family budgets 6. branch service 7. free time	1. alimentation 2. health 3. education 4. flat and its environment 5. rest 6. culture 7. work and its conditions 8. social safety 9. public order and safety 10. income distribution, that of consumption and property 11. social satisfaction and mobility 12. family and sexual life	1. alimentation 2. other unstable goods 3. flat rent 4. rent from other durable goods 5. material services 6. non-material services 7. work and its conditions 8. health 9. education 10. culture diffusion 11. rest 12. physical environment state 13. social safety	1. alimentation 2. flat, clothing, footwear 3. health 4. education 5. recreation 6. social safety 7. material standard 8. natural environment	Positive: 1. service accessibility 2. flat 3. medical care 4. education 5. culture 6. income surplus Negative: 1. flat deficit 2. mortality 3. natural environment a quality

investigations the “life conditions” term is used, as a synonym of “life standard”, understood as “identifiable and measurable part of life conditions, defining the satisfaction degree of material and non-material needs by the flux of goods and payable services and the collective consumption fund in the given period and space” (Marczyńska-Witczak, Michalski 1996). The further development of the discussed investigations made necessary the using of the subjective indices, reflecting the feelings of the researched people. Together with the objective indices, the subjective ones let to obtain fuller image of the investigated social groups and to define the satisfactions degree of their material and spiritual needs. Nevertheless the used indices, they referred to all the spheres of the human life and to reveal the subjective valuations and feelings seems necessary to research of such the aspects, like interpersonal contacts or politics. Many authors stress that the “life standard” is treated as the material welfare, or economic factors influencing the life conditions and is the sort of opposition to the “life quality”, understood as the feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, connected with the non-material needs realisation. Finnish sociologist E. Allardt divided the social welfare in two parts: 1) life standard (material needs – to have), i.e. the sphere of good disposing and consumption, 2) life quality (non-material needs – to love and to be), i.e. that of interpersonal relations and health conditions (Śmiłowska 1995). The life quality is also defined as “widely understood life conditions, considering a psychological, moral, environmental (natural) comfort – or sometimes as the difference between the real conditions and the needs, and (in American investigations) as the multidimensional welfare category” (Marczyńska-Witczak, Michalski 1996).

In those investigations the considerable geographers merit is an introduction of the spatial aspect of the life conditions differentiation. For example, M. Paszkowski (1989) proposed a scheme of social needs structure concerning its spatial differentiation. Coates and Johnston, Knox (1977) gave the life standard definition, putting the man in the space: “Life standard of an individual living in the given spatial unit is constituted by the general and combined influence of the following elements: flat, health, education, social status, work, rest, safety, social stability within the very spatial unit, together with demographical structure aspects, natural environment quality and a participation in democratic institutions, which can determine the degree of the individual’s needs satisfaction”.

In her research on Cracow suburbs the author has collected, using the questionnaire method – the abundant set of information concerning the life standard and quality of those estates inhabitants. The index defining the level of welfare of the households was a frequency of the possessing the selected goods, the technical equipment of houses or the possessing an allotment garden or a parcel with the second house, used seasonably or all year round. Another indices describing the life standard were those of flat area in m<sup>2</sup> and the room number per capita. The high frequency of 24 goods, in that some rather luxurious (a car, a video-recorder, a dish-washer, Rainbow vacuum cleaner, an automatic washing-machine, a computer) proves the considerable wealth of the discussed households, although there are some differences between particular suburbs. The best equipped are those built in the 90s, the worst – those from the 70s (Fig. 2), but generally the whole suburb zone shows the highest life standard in comparison with the remaining Cracow urban region zones (Fig. 3). An average level is observed in the city-centre,



1. car; 2. Rainbow vacuum cleaner; 3. Atlas athletic equipment 4. automatic washing machine; 5. video-recorder; 6. dish-washer; 7. computer

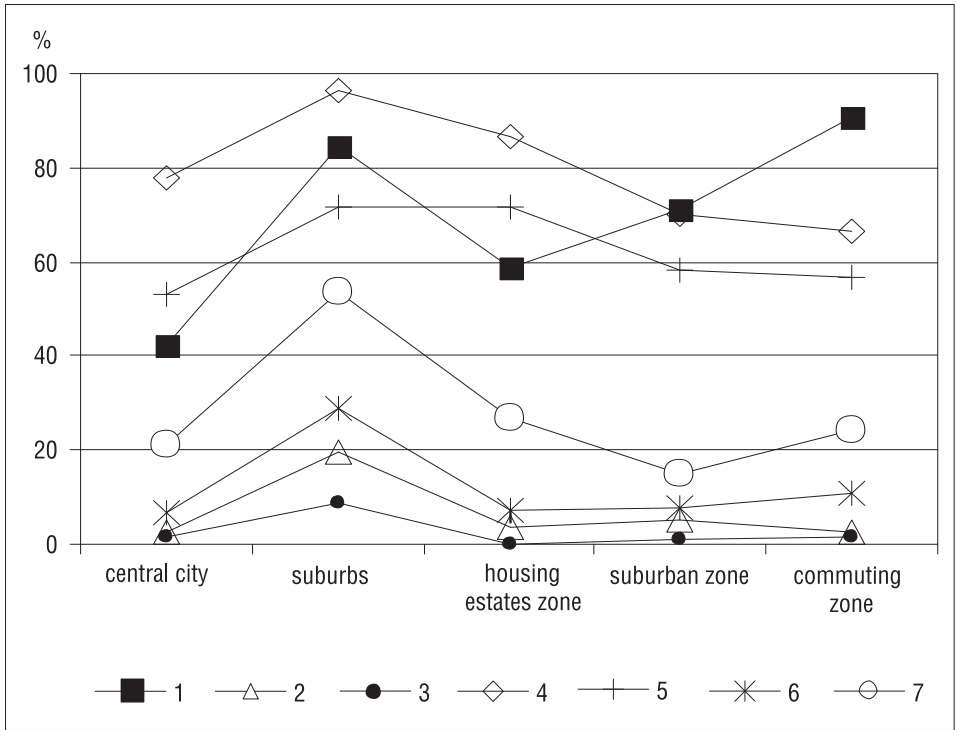
1. samochód; 2. odkurzacz typu Rainbow; 3. sprzęt gimnastyczny typu Atlas; 4. pralka automatyczna; 5. odtwarzacz video; 6. zmywarka do naczyń; 7. komputer

Fig. 2. Equipment of suburbs with chosen durable goods, by the suburb age

Ryc. 2. Wyposażenie osiedli suburbanialnych w niektóre dobra trwałego użytku, według okresu budowy osiedli

Source: Author's research.

higher – in the block zone, the highest just in that of the suburbs, and lower – in the suburban zone. (Zborowski, 1996). For example, 54% of the city-centre inhabitants have video-recorders, in the suburban zone and that of commuting – 57.5% in total, while in the suburbs – 64.0% (Zborowski, working paper). The share of dish-washer owners amounts 6.5%, 9.4% and 29% respectively, that having computers – 20.9%, 19.5% and 53.8%. The similar is the span of percentages concerning the possession of the second house and those referred to the dwelling conditions (the flat area, the room number per capita). The greatest contrast is that of the latter index – from 2.4 (the central city) through 3.9 (the suburban zone and that of commuting) to 5.0 in the researched suburbs. But this differentiation is not the same if one considers the inhabitants' own valuation, in 1-5 point scale. In all the zones this selfvaluation amounts from 2.93 (the commuting zone) to 3.67 only (the suburbs). Although the highest, the latter valuation (low in the comparison with the objective standard of life) suggests the high aspiration of the suburb population.



1. car; 2. Rainbow vacuum cleaner; 3. Atlas athletic equipment 4. automatic washing machine;  
5. video-recorder; 6. dish-washer; 7. computer

1. samochód; 2. odkurzacz typu Rainbow; 3. sprzęt gimnastyczny typu Atlas; 4. pralka automatyczna;  
5. odtwarzacz video; 6. zmywarka do naczyń; 7. komputer

Fig. 3. Equipment of Cracow urban region with chosen durable goods, by the zones

Ryc. 3. Wyposażenie mieszkańców w dobra trwałego użytku wg stref regionu miejskiego Krakowa

Source: Author's research.

The life quality was defined by the author by the valuation of the suburbs made by their inhabitants, referred to over than 10 service types, satisfying their basic needs, also in 1-5 point scale, where “1” meant “unsatisfied”, “2” – “rather unsatisfied“, “3” – “uneasy to tell”, “4” – “rather satisfied”, “5” – “satisfied”. Generally, the discussed suburbs are well equipped with food shops, but badly with those offering industrial goods – maybe because of the smaller demand. Those goods are bought generally in the city-centre, or in the supermarkets. The educational service is valued as the medium one – similar to the medical service – in all the suburbs – the values amounted 2.85-3.88 and 2.70-3.32 respectively (Fig. 4). But its worth to stress that in the youngest suburbs 60% of respondents could not value the education and 17%

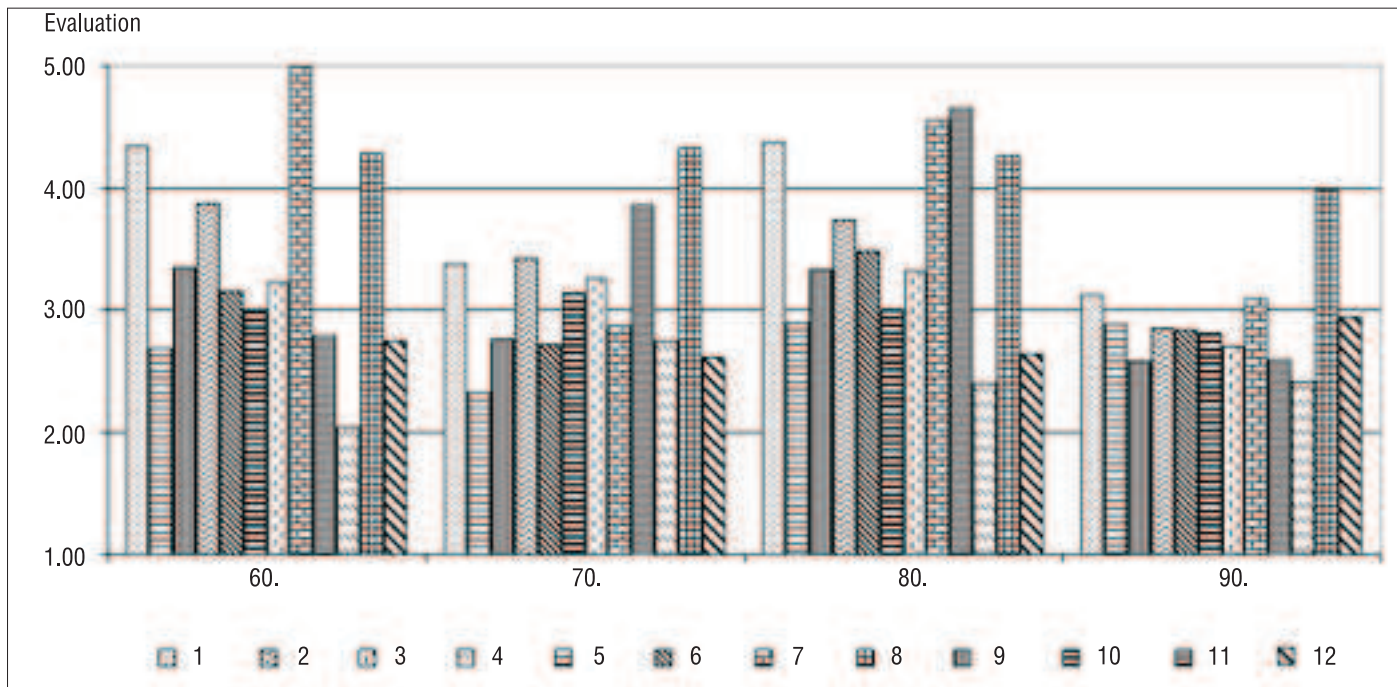


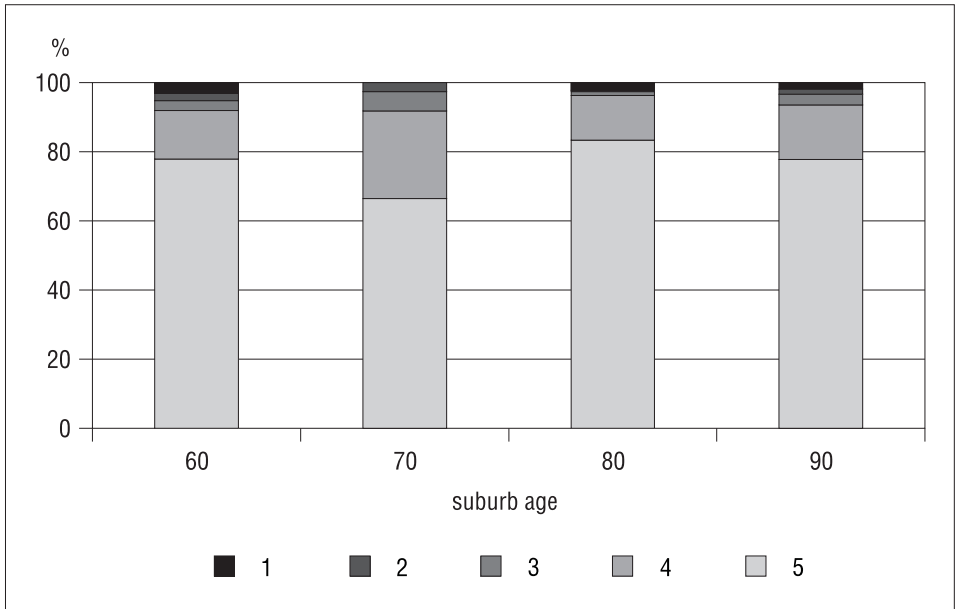
Fig. 4. Valuation of chosen services in the suburbs, by the suburb age

Ryc. 4. Ocena suburbiów wg respondentów zakresie niektórych usług, wg okresu budowy osiedli

1. food shops; 2. education; 3. medical care; 4. culture; 5. industrial good shops; 6. nursery schools; 7. pharmacies; 8. clerical care; 9. public transport; 10. social welfare; 11. the post; 12. public safety

1. handel artykułami żywnościowymi; 2. szkolnictwo; 3. usługi lekarskie; 4. ośrodki kulturalne; 5. handel artykułami przemysłowymi; 6. przedszkola; 7. apteki; 8. opieka duszpasterska; 9. komunikacja zbiorowa; 10. opieka społeczna; 11. poczta; 12. bezpieczeństwo publiczne

Source: Author's research.



1. unsatisfied; 2. rather unsatisfied; 3. uneasy to tell; 4. rather satisfied; 5. satisfied

1. niezadowolony; 2. raczej niezadowolony; 3. trudno ocenić; 4. raczej zadowolony; 5. zadowolony

Fig. 5. Valuation of the residential environment of the suburbs, by the suburb age

Ryc. 5. Ocena środowiska mieszkaniowego w suburbiach

Source: Author's own study.

were „unsatisfied”, because generally their children go to schools in other parts of Cracow. The worst valuation concerned the cultural service – there were 35% of the unsatisfied respondents, and 40% did not express their opinion. Their suburbs have no cultural infrastructure, thus those needs are satisfied out of them, usually in the city-centre. But in spite of a lack of churches on the spot, the clerical service are valued highly – the share of satisfied inhabitants amounted 55%. The satisfaction concerned the safety is low (2.61-2.94; Fig 4), especially in the oldest suburbs, built in the 70s. In those estates the partial exchange of population occurred, and many inhabitants have been separated by the high walls from their neighbours, being not interested in their environment. As regard the youngest suburbs, there are often payable guards or monitoring systems, and their inhabitants co-operate in this sphere. For example, when the interviewing was made, the information on it was transmitted from house to house. Generally, the inhabitants asked whether they were satisfied to live just in their suburb, chose – in 70% - the answer “yes”, in accordance to results of similar sociological investigations (Frysztacki 1997) and with that of their high valuation



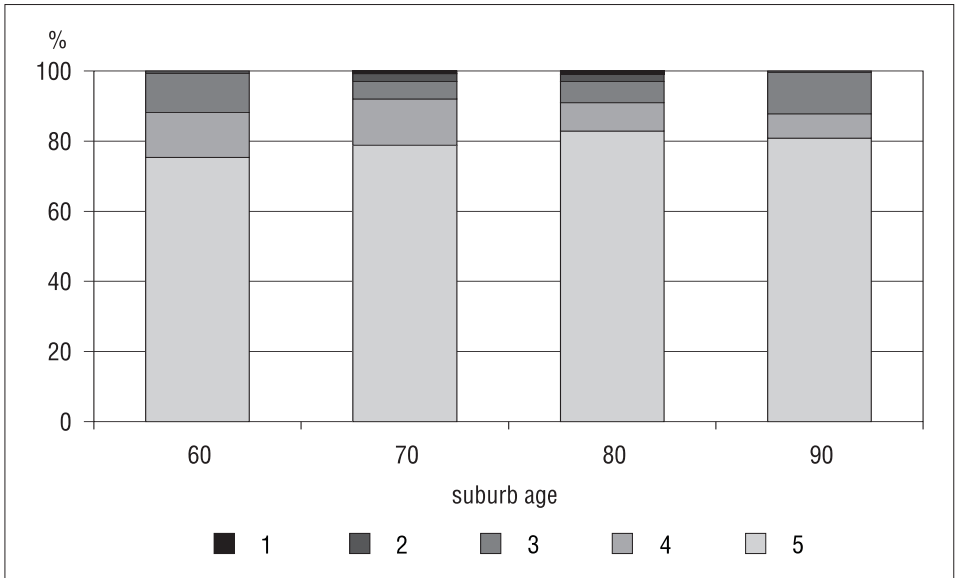
of the place of residence: 4.5-4.8 in the particular suburbs. The latter value is also proved by the low percentage of those, who want to leave their suburbs (12.2%).

The life quality valuation is strictly connected with that of the various spheres of the personal life. The author considered over 10 aspects – satisfaction connected with children, friends, the personal life, the place of residence, the neighbours, work, household, the dwelling conditions, the education level, the social status, psychical and mental health, the quantity of free time and ways of spending it, the material situation, realisation of democracy principle in Poland and the self-government activity – all in the same 1-5 point scale. The author chose some of those aspects to be presented in her paper.

As regard the dwelling environment, over 90% of the interviewed people were “satisfied” or “rather satisfied”, no matter the suburb (Fig. 5). The greatest share of satisfied inhabitants was found in the oldest and youngest suburbs (some 84%). The valuation of the dwelling conditions amounted over 90% in all the suburbs (which, in fact, are built up with the houses of the highest standard) – except for the 70s suburbs (70% of satisfied respondents), lying at Nowa Huta district. Generally, the dwelling conditions were valued at 4.8 – this is the highest valuation for the whole city; for the city-centre it amounted 3.9-4.3 only (Zborowski, working paper). Considerably lower is the valuation concerning the neighbours – in the suburbs built in the 70s only a half of inhabitants expressed their satisfaction, but this sphere is the worst valued in all the Cracow urban region zones of all concerning the dwelling environment - maybe because is the only element referred to people. Also in the case of the City of Łódź the zone of the unifamilial buildings of higher standard, situated close to the city-centre (Julianów) was valued as the best residential place (Kaczmarek 1996). The development of this type of dwelling and a “fashion” to live in such the zones is observed in other parts of Poland, too (Gawlikowska-Hueckel, Umiński 1999; Cendrowska 1998).

Even 75-82% of the interviewed people were satisfied of their personal life – the share of “unsatisfied” together with the “rather unsatisfied” once amounted below 2.2%, in all the suburbs (Fig. 6). Generally, most of Cracow population, in all the zones of the urban region, is satisfied of the quality of the social contacts and the personal life. Their social relations with families are common and dense (Frysztacki 1997). The suburb inhabitants valued their physical and mental health as good – the share of “satisfied” amounted 46-70%, that of “rather satisfied” – 18-27%. There are differences between the suburbs, concerned with their age – and the age of their population. In the whole urban region the valuation is differentiated considerably – being the highest just in the suburbs (4.2), falls outside of them, below 4.0.

The satisfaction of the socio-economic status, depending on the education, the work, the material situation and the social position, is rather high among the suburb population (Fig. 7). Most of it (70-87%) expressed the high level of this satisfaction (10% could not value it). The author found again the relation with the age of the given suburb – younger is the suburb, higher is the share of people satisfied of their material situation (20-50%), although, in fact they all belong to the well-to-do group. The social position is valued much highly (70-90% satisfied), even higher – the education, which is again in accordance with the objective data. The work is appreciated differently – in the suburbs built in the 60s and 70s the half of inhabitants could not give the answer



1. unsatisfied; 2. rather unsatisfied; 3. uneasy to tell; 4. rather satisfied; 5. satisfied  
 1. niezadowolony; 2. raczej niezadowolony; 3. trudno ocenić; 4. raczej zadowolony; 5. zadowolony

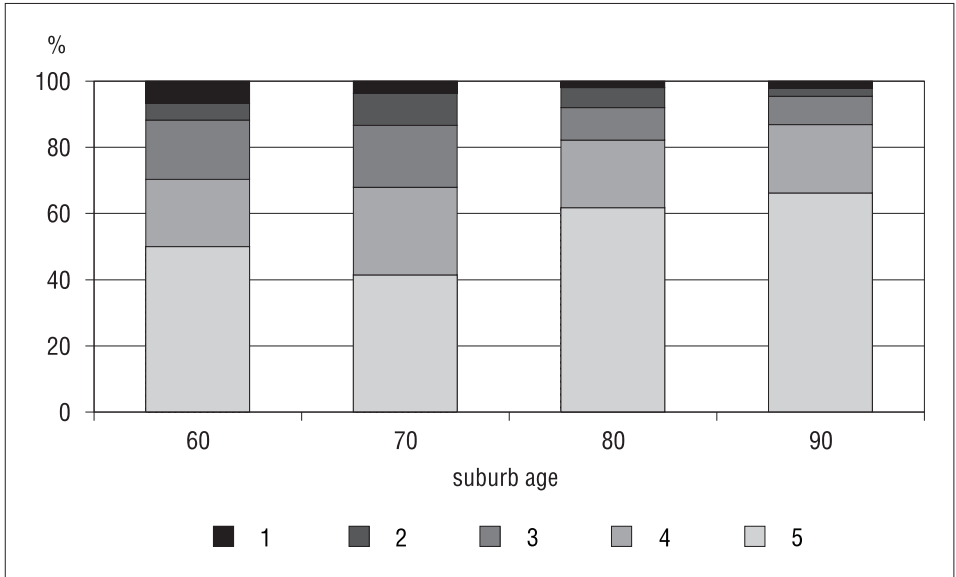
Fig. 6. Valuation of the person life of the suburb inhabitants, by the suburb age

Ryc. 6. Ocena życia osobistego w suburbiach

Source: Author's own study.

(“uneasy to tell”), because they are pensioned (in 80%). In the remaining suburbs 3/4 were satisfied of their work – and there was nobody, who was unsatisfied. Such the result is proved by the position of those people – according to the Ministry of Work and Social Policy profession classification, some 2.5-3.0% of them are higher officers and directors of great enterprises, 30% - specialists, while the share of workers amounts 1.5% only. In the Cracow urban region the valuation of professional situation is more differentiated – it is higher in the city-centre, lower in the zone of blocks and in the suburban one. It amounts 3.7% in average, while in the suburbs: 4.3 (Zborowski, working paper). Those values are rather high in comparison with the national ones, because Poles, unlike other Central-Eastern European nations join the transition period with the fall of their social status, although appreciate social advancement higher than the material one (Beskid 1999). A considerable differentiation of the social status valuation is observed within the particular social groups. Managers, specialist and businessmen declare the status increase, while pensioners, workers and unemployed – the social degradation.

The life quality and standard problem are the interesting investigation field, especially during the period of the radical political and economic transformation,



1. unsatisfied; 2. rather unsatisfied; 3. uneasy to tell; 4. rather satisfied; 5. satisfied  
 1. niezadowolony; 2. raczej niezadowolony; 3. trudno ocenić; 4. raczej zadowolony; 5. zadowolony

Fig. 7. Valuation of the socio-economic status of the suburb inhabitants, by the suburb age  
 Ryc. 7. Ocena statusu społeczno-ekonomicznego mieszkańców suburbiów

Source: Author's own study.

and their results are important both from the scientific and practical points of view. Those results let to define a scope of social transformation of Poland, reached due to the economic transition initiated in our country more than 10 years ago. It is also important to find a level of adaptation of various social groups to the new reality, both in economic and psychological spheres, and to study the process of the new social strata/classes emerging and that of the growing social differentiation of Poland's population.

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## Jakość i poziom życia mieszkańców krakowskich osiedli suburbanalnych

### Streszczenie

Kraje wysoko rozwinięte znacznie wcześniej osiągnęły wyższe fazy urbanizacji, w tym suburbanizacji, głównie dzięki wysokiemu stopniowi ich rozwoju gospodarczego. Wielkie aglomeracje, a nawet i mniejsze ośrodki w Europie Zachodniej, Japonii i Australii, a zwłaszcza w Stanach Zjednoczonych, otoczone są rozległymi suburbiami. W Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej dopiero od początku lat 90. zaistniał bardzo intensywny rozwój budownictwa jednorodzinnego, reprezentowanego zarówno przez stosunkowo niewielkie domy szeregowe jak i okazałe wille.

W powojennym Krakowie osiedla zabudowy jednorodzinnej o cechach suburbanalnych powstawały już w latach 50., jednak obserwowany wzrost liczby mieszkańców w obrębie całego regionu miejskiego wynikał głównie z napływu ludności do licznie powstających wtedy zespołów zabudowy blokowej, wobec ograniczeń narzucanych budownictwu jednorodzinnemu. Rozwój takiej zabudowy zaznaczył się wyraźnie po 1989 r., kiedy przestały obowiązywać restrykcje typowe dla gospodarki centralnie sterowanej, a zarazem nastąpiła wyraźna tendencja do różnicowania się społeczeństwa Polski pod względem zamożności i pozycji społeczno-zawodowej.

Artykuł prezentuje zagadnienia dotyczące jakości i poziomu życia ludności miejskiej na przykładzie mieszkańców krakowskich osiedli suburbanalnych. Ocena jakości i poziomu życia mieszkańców wybranych osiedli dokonana została poprzez analizę wymiernych mierników obiektywnych określających status ekonomiczny badanej społeczności. Miernikiem wyznaczającym stopień zamożności gospodarstw domowych jest częstość występowania wybranych dóbr materialnych, wyposażenia domów w rozmaite urządzenia infrastruktury technicznej oraz fakt posiadania ogródka działkowego czy działki letniskowej z domem całorocznym lub sezonowym. Przeprowadzone analizy częstości występowania 24 różnych dóbr materialnych, w tym częściowo o charakterze luksusowym (samochód osobowy, magnetowid, zmywarka do naczyń, odkurzacz Rainbow, pralka automatyczna, komputer, sprzęt gimnastyczny typu atlas) pozwalają na stwierdzenie wysokiego stopnia zamożności badanych gospodarstw domowych, jakkolwiek obserwowane są różnice między poszczególnymi grupami osiedlami. Najlepiej wyposażone są osiedla najnowsze, z lat 90., najgorzej osiedla z lat 70., jednak i tak ogółem strefa suburbiów wyróżnia się bardzo wysokim pod tym względem poziomem życia w porównaniu z pozostałymi strefami regionu miejskiego Krakowa, gdzie przeciętny poziom życia notowany jest w centrum, wyższy w strefie bloków, wyraźnie wzrasta w suburbiach, a obniża się w strefie podmiejskiej. Zróżnicowanie w zakresie wyposażenia w dobra materialne nie odpowiada jednak w pełni ocenie sytuacji materialnej dokonanej przez samych respondentów. Ocena ta, choć jest najwyższa w suburbiach spośród wszystkich stref, to niższy subiektywny stopień zadowolenia z zamożności w stosunku do wysokiego obiektywnie standardu życia wskazuje na wyższe aspiracje mieszkańców suburbiów w tym zakresie.

Jakość życia w badanych osiedlach suburbanalnych określono m.in. poprzez ocenę miejsc zamieszkania, dokonaną przez ich mieszkańców, w zakresie kilkunastu rodzajów działalności zaspokajających podstawowe potrzeby człowieka. Poszczególne potrzeby zaspokajane są w różnym zakresie, jednak generalnie w odpowiedzi na wprost sformułowane pytanie o stopień zadowolenia z faktu zamieszkiwania w danym miejscu ponad 70% respondentów wybrało odpowiedź: „zdecydowanie tak”. Wysoki stopień oceny swojego otoczenia potwierdza też niski odsetek osób (12,2%) wyrażających chęć zmiany miejsca zamieszkania.

Uwzględnione zostały również aspekty subiektywnej oceny jakości życia, częściowo charakteryzujących też strukturę społeczną tej społeczności. W artykule prezentowane są oceny kilku zasadniczych dziedzin: środowiska mieszkaniowego, życia osobistego oraz pozycji społeczno – ekonomicznej. W odniesieniu do środowiska mieszkaniowego zdecydowana większość respondentów ze wszystkich badanych osiedli wyraziła duży stopień satysfakcji: ogółem ponad 90% ankietowanych osób było zadowolonych i raczej zadowolonych. W przypadku oceny życia osobistego liczba zadowolonych z niego respondentów waha się w granicach 75–82%, a niezadowolonych i raczej niezadowolonych jest zaledwie 0-2,2%. Stopień zadowolenia ze swojej pozycji społeczno-ekonomicznej, na którą składają się wykształcenie, praca zawodowa, sytuacja materialna i status społeczny jest dość wysoki. Większość – 70-87% ankietowanych ogółem ma wysokie poczucie własnej wartości, bowiem wyraża zadowolenie, a około połowy respondentów jest ze swojej pozycji społeczno-ekonomicznej zadowolona, przy czym około 10% respondentów trudno było to ocenić.

Połączenie analizy mierników obiektywnych (materialnych) i subiektywnych (określających odczucia badanych osób) pozwala na uzyskanie pełniejszego obrazu badanych grup społecznych i określenie stopnia zaspokojenia ich potrzeb materialnych i duchowych.

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