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LIVING CONDITIONS AND FUNCTIONAL STRUCTURE OF RURAL COMMUNES IN POLAND

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The paper presents relations between living conditions in rural areas and functions of communes in Poland. The first part describes spatial diversification of the aforementioned characteristics as well as of the infra-structural outfit and economic potential defined by the W_{WZ} index. The examined features stay in close mutual relation. The lowest values of the W_{WZ} index appear in communes with domination or co-domination of agricultural functions, whereas the highest ones occur in areas with a great importance of various non-agricultural functions such as housing, industry, service or tourism. The other part focuses on rural inhabitants' subjective assessments of changes of living conditions and their effects. The results of the survey, done in four intentionally chosen communes, are presented. A high unemployment rate and bad condition of roads were pointed out as the most important problems. Predominance of negative assessments of own financial status and living conditions is more significant in communes with bioproductive functions than in areas with a prevalence of services. Finally, directions of changes are suggested.

Key words: rural areas, functions of communes, infra-structural outfit, economic potential, living conditions, subjective assessments, Poland

INTRODUCTION

Non-agricultural employment of rural inhabitants, or wider, multifunctionality of rural areas is one of the most important subjects of modern human geog-

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raphy. It is connected with defining a lot of social and economic problems that torment Polish rural areas and agriculture in general (for instance Stasiak and Zglinski 1997, Zegar and Florianczyk 2003). Detailed studies on linkages between rural areas' level of development and the functions of communes (Polish word *gmina* – NUTS 5) allow us to distinguish the majority of social and economic problems. These works may be very valuable in terms of creating general outlines for state or regional development, where an individual approach is required in order to eliminate errors and weaknesses.

Living conditions can be studied both, in macro- and in microscale (Lisowski 1990). Objective and subjective data can be used to present the spatial diversification of this feature.

This paper aims to define relations between the living conditions of rural inhabitants and the function of the commune. Better infra-structural outfit and higher economic potential are anticipated to characterize communes with non-agricultural functions. This, in turn, conditions the possibility of quicker success in finding an alternative income source. During the period of great social and economic transformation improvement of living conditions proceeded variously across Poland. That is why the presentation of rural inhabitants' opinion about the results of these processes seems to be necessary.

FUNCTIONS OF RURAL AREAS

For ages rural areas have been associated only with agriculture. No other function than bioproductive has been distinguished for these areas. As a result of the economic development of Poland, agriculture lost its dominant share in creation of the Gross Domestic Product and employment in agriculture is no the longer main source of income for considerable number of rural inhabitants. *The dichotomous division into rural and urban area has been progressively vanishing and functions, so far characteristic almost only for urban areas, have appeared also in rural ones* (Kostrowicki 1976, p. 602). Already in the mid-1980s W. Stola wrote that *social and economic development results in quantitative and qualitative changes in ways of management in rural areas, as well as in work and living conditions of people living there* (Stola 1987, p. 11).

Analysis of relations between living conditions and the functions of communes is based on the newest classification of functional structure presented by Banski and Stola (2002). The authors chose eight diagnostic features on the basis of which they defined ten functional classes gathered in the five groups (Tab. 1).

Spatial diversification of rural areas' functions shows significant domination of agriculture in Central Poland (Fig. 1). Prevalence of agricultural functions characterizes more than 56 % of communes, which is almost 50 % of rural areas and nearly 55 % of the rural population in Poland. Almost 8 % of communes represent a situation of co-dominance of agriculture and forestry or tourism.

Tab. 1. Functional structure of rural areas

Groups	Functional classes
A. with a prevalence of agricultural functions	1. non-commercial agriculture 2. intensive and commercial agriculture 3. mixed agriculture with shares of 1 and 2 4. agriculture with a share of non-agricultural functions
B. with equal shares of various functions	5. mixed functions
C. with a prevalence of forestry	6. forestry with a share of non-agricultural functions 7. forestry with agriculture
D. with a prevalence of tourist-related and recreational functions	8. tourism with a share of agriculture 9. tourism with a share of non-agricultural functions
E. with a prevalence of non-agricultural functions	10. non-agricultural functions (housing, services and others)

Source: Banski and Stola (2002)

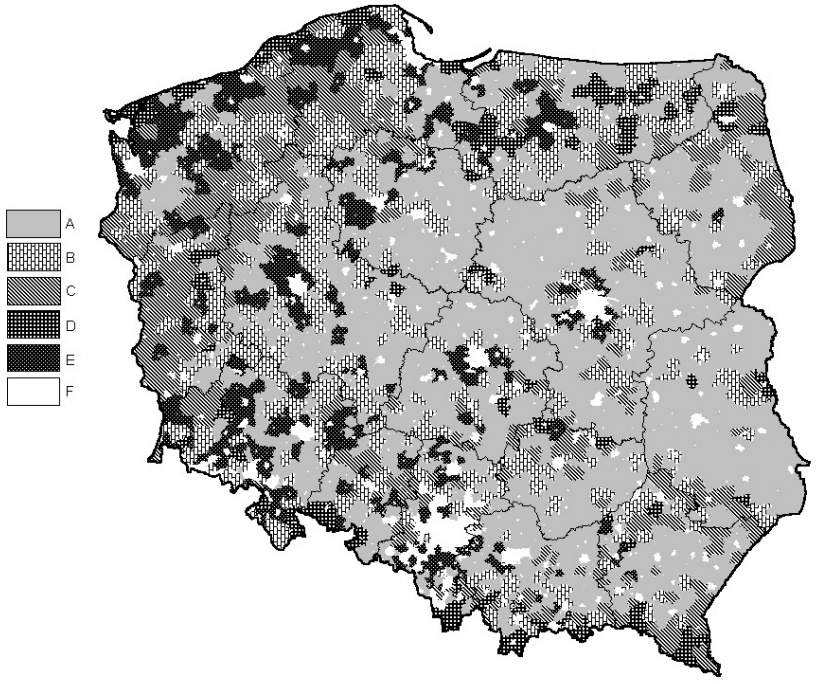

Fig. 1. Functions of rural areas (Source: Banski and Stola 2002)

A – prevalence of agricultural functions, B – equal share of various functions, C – prevalence of forestry, D – prevalence of recreational functions, E – prevalence of non-agricultural functions, F – cities

LIVING CONDITIONS

In a period of specialization in the geographical sciences analysis of spatial diversification of living conditions may be considered as an integrating research programme (Liszewski 1999). The term *living conditions* is used in many scientific papers. Authors put it in various contexts, which results in different understandings of its meaning. It induces more precise definition of the point of this subject and explanation of the meaning of such apparently synonymous terms as *living standard, quality of life, level of life* and *living conditions.* Examples of such definitions can be found in Barta (1976), Ignar (1987), Szlajfer (1991), Czyż and Chojnicki (1991), Tibor (1993), Gulbicka and Nieweglowska (1995), Liszewski (1995 and 1999), Piecek and Tryfan (1999), Huba (2004) and Smith (2004).

Living conditions can be treated as a part of conception of social well-being and it can describe the disproportion between people's needs and wants. In *The Dictionary of Human Geography* the conception of the geography of welfare is described in terms of "the well society". *A well society is one in which all people have sufficient income to meet their basic needs, for example,* (…) *where they have reasonable access to their needed range of services* (Johnston et al. 1998, p. 568).

In this paper *living conditions* are understood as goods mostly independent of people. There are goods *given from the outside*, which belong to mass-consumption, and for which people pay only partly and in an indirect way (*merit and public goods*). People's surroundings, which are equipped with various means of infrastructure that are the basis of human activities, play an important role in the formation of living conditions. Beside that economic potential, social base as well as environmental and health factors affect the conditions of living.

SPATIAL DIVERSIFICATION OF LIVING CONDITIONS

Method

In many detailed studies living conditions are described in a complex way on the basis of either only demographic, or economic features. Already in mid-1990s S. Leszczycki and R. Domański pointed out that the *level of life depends on many factors and it cannot be described using only one index that characterizes one chosen determinant* (Leszczycki and Domański 1995, p. 42). In this paper analysis is based on features connected with infra-structural outfit and economic potential of rural areas. The below mentioned characteristics were taken into account:

- Number of shops per one village;
- Length of the water-lines per 100 km^2;
- Length of the sewerage system network per 100 km^2;
- Number of enterprises recorded in the REGON register per 1000 inhabitants;
- Commune budget incomes per capita in Polish zloty;
- Share of employed in total population in productive age.

The study was made for the year 2002 using the data from the Regional Data Bank of Central Statistical Office of Poland (www.stat.gov.pl). Values refer to rural communes and to the rural parts of urban-rural communes.

The detailed method was presented in another paper (Czapiewski 2004). Only the final result of the analysis is shown here. Standardization of diagnostic features was carried out as (Perkal's index):

$$t_{ij} = \frac{x_{ij} - \overline{x}_j}{S(x)}$$

where, x_{ij} is the value of feature j in unit i, x_j is the arithmetic mean of feature j and $S(x)$ stands for the standard deviation of feature j.

The synthetic rate of the infra-structural and economic level of rural inhabitants living conditions (W_{WZ} index) can be written as:

$$W_{wż} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{j=1}^{i} t_{ij}$$

where: n is the amount of diagnostic features (6 in this paper), j is the number of the feature.

Standardized values of W_{WZ} index were divided into 5 classes and valued as shown in Tab. 2.

Tab. 2. Rank according to the value of W_{WZ} index

W_{WZ} index value	Rank
Below – 0.35	1
From – 0.35 to – 0.1	2
From – 0.1 to 0.1	3
From 0.1 to 0,35	4
Above 0.35	5

Source: author's work-out.

RESULTS

The wide belt of communes that expands from Dolny Slask via Wielkopolska and Kujawy to the Kaszuby region is an area of notably higher values of W_{WZ} index (Fig. 2). Moreover, suburban areas around Warszawa, Lodz, Czestochowa, Krakow, Kielce, Rzeszow, Olsztyn, Szczecin and the conurbation of Gorny Slask are clearly seen. Concentric spheres of living conditions' index values higher than the national mean also appear around other big towns. Technical infrastructure, convenient localization, labour supply (including highly qualified), communication connections and buying power of the population are important factors of investment attractiveness (Dziemianowicz after Wielonski

2004). Majority of agglomeration suburban communes meets these criteria. In turn, the communes of Podlaskie, Lubelskie and partly of Swietokrzyskie, Podkarpackie and Warminsko-Mazurskie voivodeships as well as peripheral areas of Mazowieckie and Lodzkie voivodeships are areas of notably lower values of the W_{WZ} index.

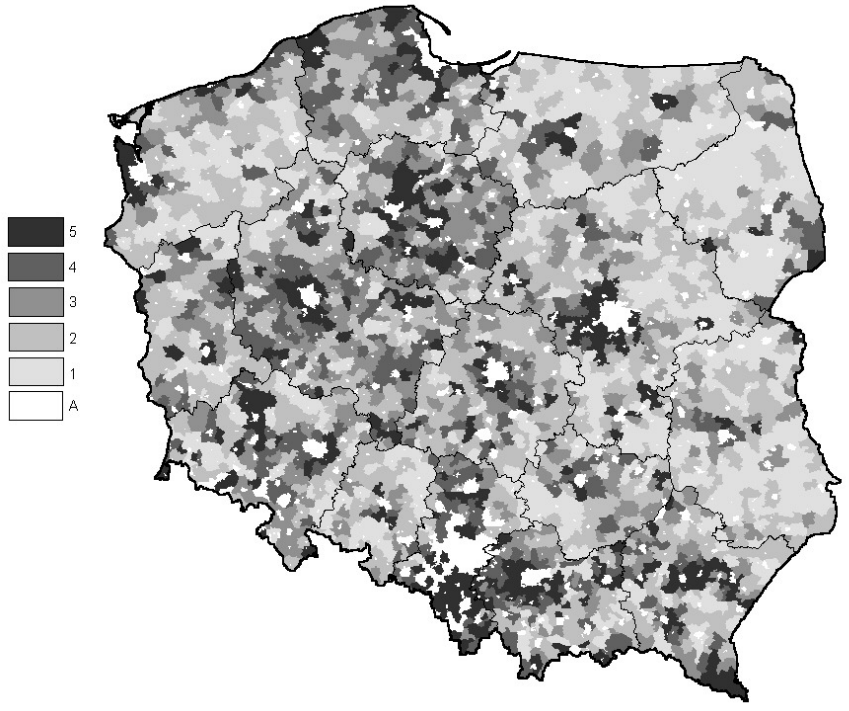

Fig. 2. Infra-structural and economic rate of living conditions in 2002

Value of index W_{WZ}: 5 – very high, 4 – high, 3 – average, 2 – low, 1 – very low, A – cities

Another belt of communes with relatively better living conditions appears noticeably along the E-4 motorway from Ukrainian border through Rzeszow, Krakow, Katowice and Wroclaw to the German border (south of Poland). This as well as the aforementioned significantly better situation in suburban communes corresponds to the often-pointed directions at spatial development impulse diffusion in Polish conditions. It takes place mainly from the west to the east, from large urban centres to surroundings regions and along main transport corridors in the country (Węcławowicz et al. 2002). The received spatial scheme refers remarkably to F. Ratzel's core-periphery model (later developed by J. Friedmann) and to J. R. Boudeville's polarized region concept (Rykiel 1991, Grzeszczak 1999).

RELATIONS BETWEEN LIVING CONDITIONS AND FUNCTIONAL STRUCTURE

Analysis of infra-structural outfit and commune functions shows some relations between these features (Fig. 3). The number of shops and equipment in the

water-lines and sewerage system network in communes of class 4 (dominance of agriculture with simultaneous share of non-agricultural functions) are notably higher and better than the average in Poland. It is connected with the specific conditions in areas with this type of agriculture (piedmont regions of Podkarpackie and Malopolskie voivodeships). Usually there are large villages with a couple of shops and concentrated buildings, which is conductive to the enlargement of water-lines and sewerage systems. Relatively the worst level of infrastructural outfit is typical for the rest of the areas with prevailing agricultural or forestry functions. Communes where non-agricultural (mainly housing, industry and services) and touristic functions dominate are areas with the highest number of shops in a villages.

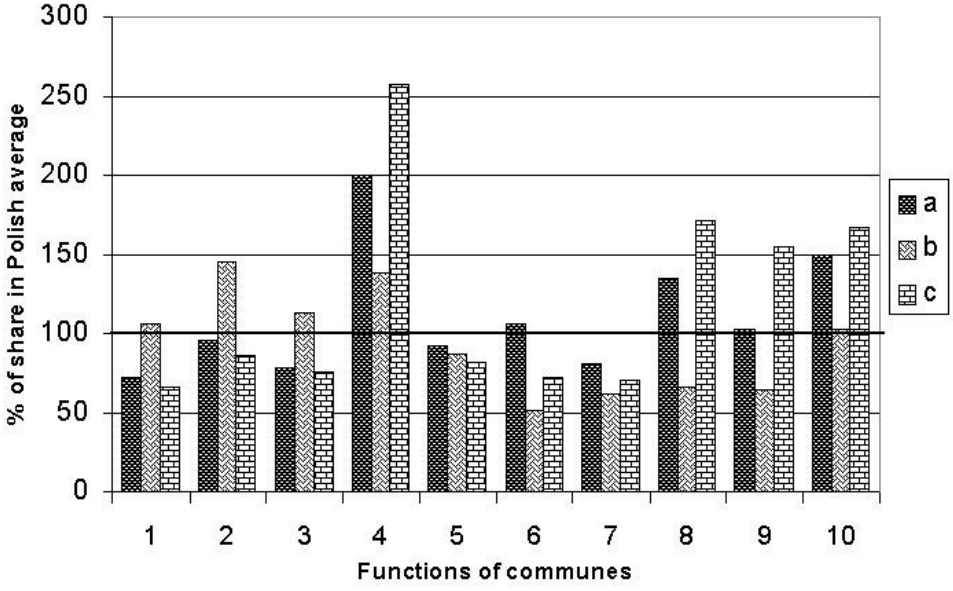

Fig. 3. Infra-structural outfit in relation to functions of communes (Poland = 100)

a – number of shops per one village, b – water-lines length per 100 km^2, c – sewerage system length per 100 km^2

The biggest difference in length between water-lines and sewerage networks occurs in areas with a prevalence of agriculture (classes 1-3) and with more than 11 km of water-lines per 1 km of sewerage system exceeds the average of 7,5 km for rural areas in Poland (Fig. 4). This is strictly connected with localization of these areas in Central and Eastern Poland where historical lateness in development of water-lines is presently being made up and construction of sewerage system is postponed. The smallest difference characterizes communes with dominance of touristic functions, which may attest the reasonable and future-oriented policy of local authorities. Only equal development of both water-lines and sewerage system will further strengthen the of tourist functions in these areas.

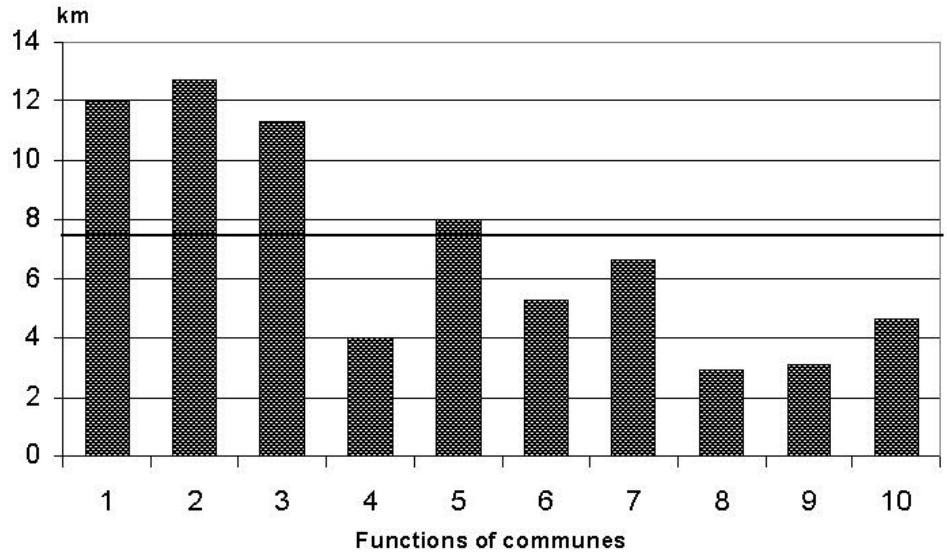

Fig. 4. Water-lines length per 1 km of sewers (Poland = 7,5 km)

As shown on Fig. 5 values of economic potential remarkably exceeding the average for the rural areas of Poland, are characteristic only for communes with dominance of touristic (class 9) and non-agricultural (class 10) activities. Definitely the worst economic potential occurs in areas representing agricultural (especially these of class 1) and forestry (class 7) functions.

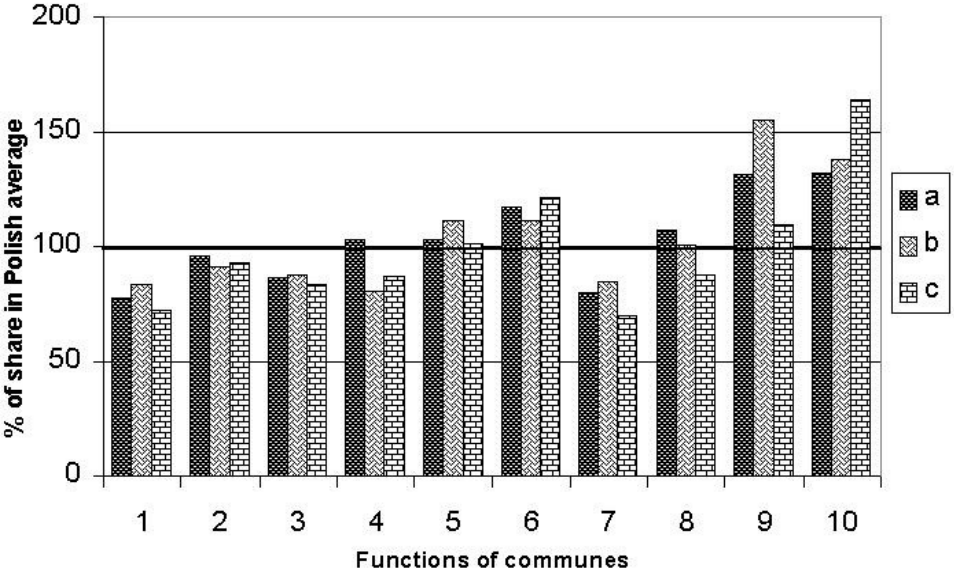

Fig. 5. Economic potential in relation to functions of communes (Poland = 100)

a – number of enterprises recorded in the REGON register per 1000 inhabitants, b – commune incomes per capita in zloty, c – share of employed in total population of productive age

The level of economic investments affects the living conditions of inhabitants significantly. There can be two reasons for this situation: a direct one – non-agricultural employment and an indirect one – receipts from taxes. Commune authorities can destine obtained income for development of infrastructure, which notably improves the unit's ability to compete for new investments (Wielonski 2004). Popularisation of activity among inhabitants is also very essential (Kolodziejczyk 2002).

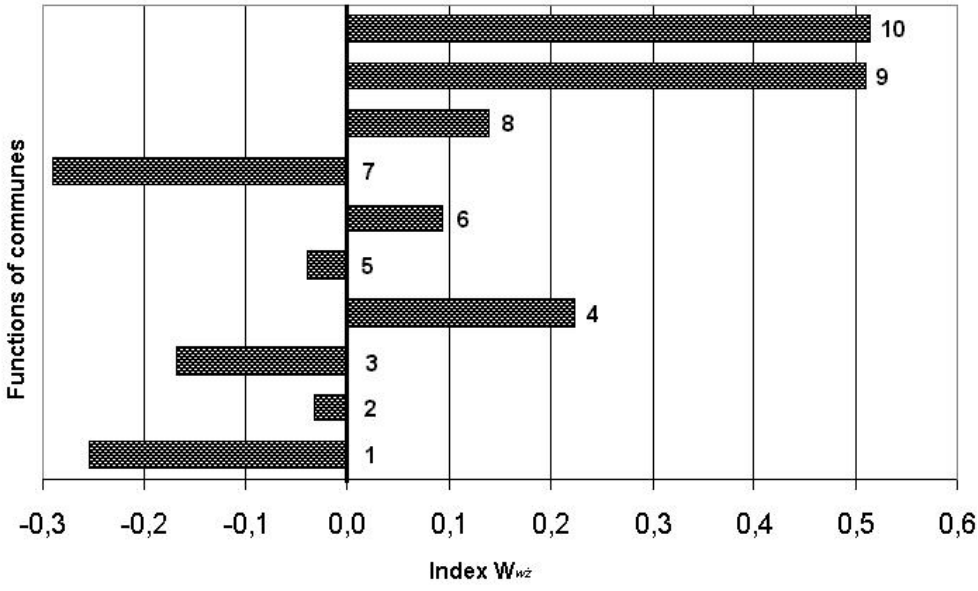

Fig. 6. Living conditions rate (index W_{WZ}) in relation to functional structure of communes (Poland = 0)

1 – non-commercial agriculture, 2 – intensive and commercial agriculture, 3 – mixed agriculture with shares of 1 and 2 type, 4 – agriculture with shares of non-agriculture functions, 5 – mixed functions, 6 – forestry with shares of non-agriculture functions, 7 – forestry with agriculture, 8 – tourism with a share of agriculture, 9 – tourism with shares of non-agriculture functions, 10 – non-agriculture functions (housing, services and others)

The lowest values of W_{WZ} index characterize areas with dominance of agricultural functions, whereas the highest ones are typical of communes with developed non-agricultural activities (Fig. 6). However, Polish agriculture is very diversified, which affects living condition as well. Notably lower values of W_{WZ} index occur in communes with non-intensive and non-commercial agriculture (class 1). In ones representing class 2 (intensive and commercial agriculture) they are close to the average for rural areas in Poland. In turn, W_{WZ} index for communes with mixed type of agriculture (class 3) reaches values between those for classes 1 and 2, which confirm transition of these areas. The most favourable situation amid communes from group A characterizes areas where besides the 1st sector of economy the other sectors play important roles (class 4).

The values of the W_{WZ} index for communes with mixed functions (class 5) are close to the national mean, which arises directly from their character. An interesting situation appears in areas with prevalence of forestry or tourism (groups C and D). In both cases they were divided into classes with a share of either agricultural (7, 8) or non-agricultural (6, 9) functions. As shown on Fig. 6 lower values of W_{WZ} index occur in communes where, apart from the dominant function, agriculture is also important. The highest values of the W_{WZ} index characterize areas with dominance of non-agricultural functions (class 10).

LIVING CONDITIONS IN INHABITANTS ASSESSMENTS

Microscale studies were carried out in four intentionally chosen communes during fieldwork in 2002/2003 (Fig. 7). These communes are:

- Cmolas (Podkarpackie voivodeship) as an example of a peasant commune (commuted farms, high number of workers per 1 ha of arable land),
- Potegowo (Pomorskie voivodeship) as an example of a post-state-farm commune,
- Jelesnia (Slaskie voivodeship) as an example of a commune with tourist and recreational functions,
- Nieporet (Mazowieckie voivodeship) as an example of a suburban, dwelling commune.

Fig. 7. Location of research communes

In each commune about one hundred questionnaires were made (in all four-research units 410). Surveys were made only among rural inhabitants. These communes are characteristic for the region where they are situated and represent the most typical functions, which can be found in Polish rural areas. They were chosen after long studies of literature, statistical data, searching the official web-pages of self-government units, talks with local authorities and as well making a few field trips. Two of the research communes (Cmolas and Potegowo) can be treated as agricultural areas and the other two (Jelesnia and Nieporet) as service communes.

Change in water and sewerage infrastructure outfit after 1990 was assessed in the most various ways (Fig. 8). Results not only show differences in local authorities' approach to this matter, but are also connected with diversity of environmental conditions. In Cmolas commune where, according to local documents, a lot of effort had been put in to improving the functionality of various elements of infrastructure over 80 % of those questioned noticed positive changes. In turn, in Jelesnia commune not much was done with the problem of water supplies and the fact that nearly ¾ of the inhabitants did not notice any improvement cannot be surprising.

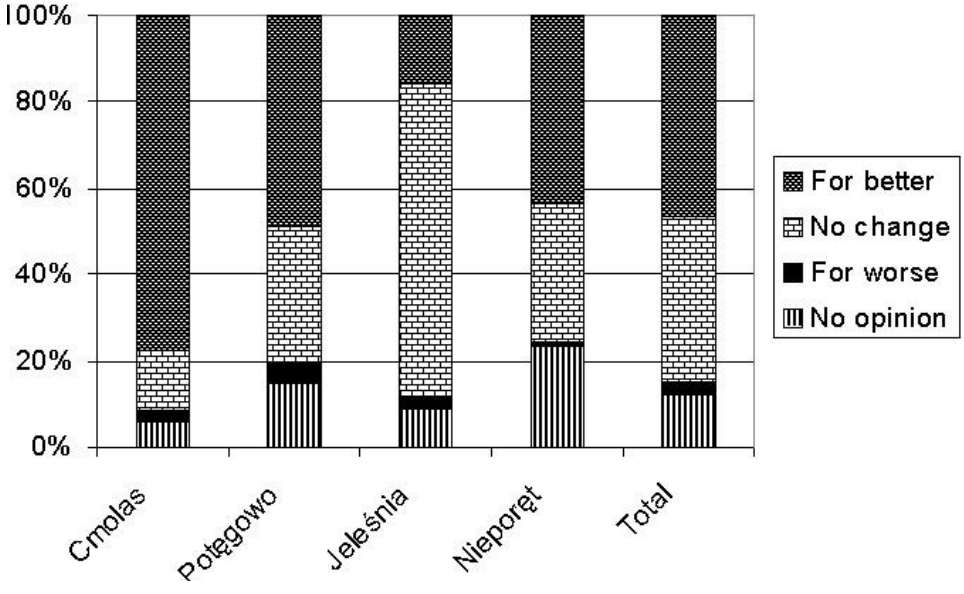

Fig. 8. Change in equipment in water-lines and sewerage system after 1990

The supply of the most often used shops gained quite good rates as almost ¾ of people assessed it positively while not more than 4 % negatively (Fig. 9). According to over 60 % of those surveyed the level of market services after 1990 got better. These indications are logical consequence of the changes, which took place in Poland in the period of social and economic transformation. Nowadays almost everyone can start an economic activity if only in their opinion, it brings profit. It causes bigger competition and, as a result, improvement of shops' supply.

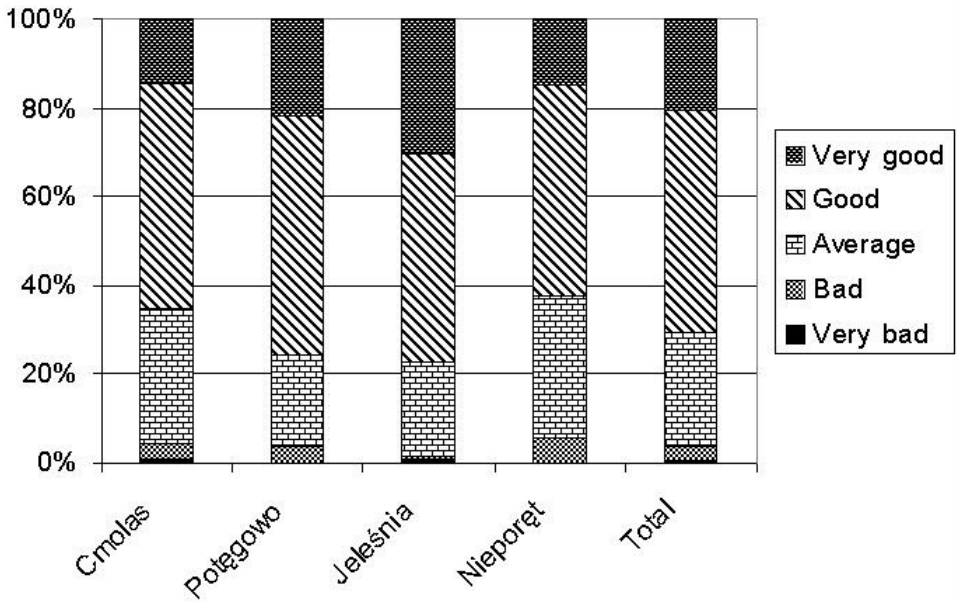

Fig. 9. Assessment of shops' functionality

Unemployment in rural areas may occur as either a lack of jobs in non-agricultural occupations or a hidden unemployment in agriculture itself. Almost 65 % of those questioned have a close relative who is without work (Fig. 10). A great disproportion between the two research communes with bioproductive functions (80 % with an unemployed relative) and the other two with service functions (50 %) can be noticed. It manifests greater possibilities of finding a job in areas with other than agricultural activities and diversified sources of inhabitants' incomes.

According to National Census 1,25 million people have been without work in rural areas in Poland, which makes unemployment rate as high as 19,8 %. People with basic vocational as well as with complete and incomplete primary education compose the majority of the unemployed (over 70 %). The highest unemployment rate characterize "post-state-farm voivodeships": Warminsko-Mazurskie, Zachodniopomorskie, Lubuskie and Dolnoslaskie (GUS 2003b).

Assessment of own financial status is strictly related to the aforementioned problem of unemployment (Pearson's correlation coefficient $r = –0,41$). The questioned people who assess their material status higher rarely deal with unemployment in their families and vice versa. Quite big differences between two communes with bioproductive and two service functions should be pointed out as well (Fig. 11). In first ones 46 % of people assessed their financial situation negatively while only 7 % had a positive opinion. In turn, in service communes about 20 % of surveyed gave either positive or negative assessments.

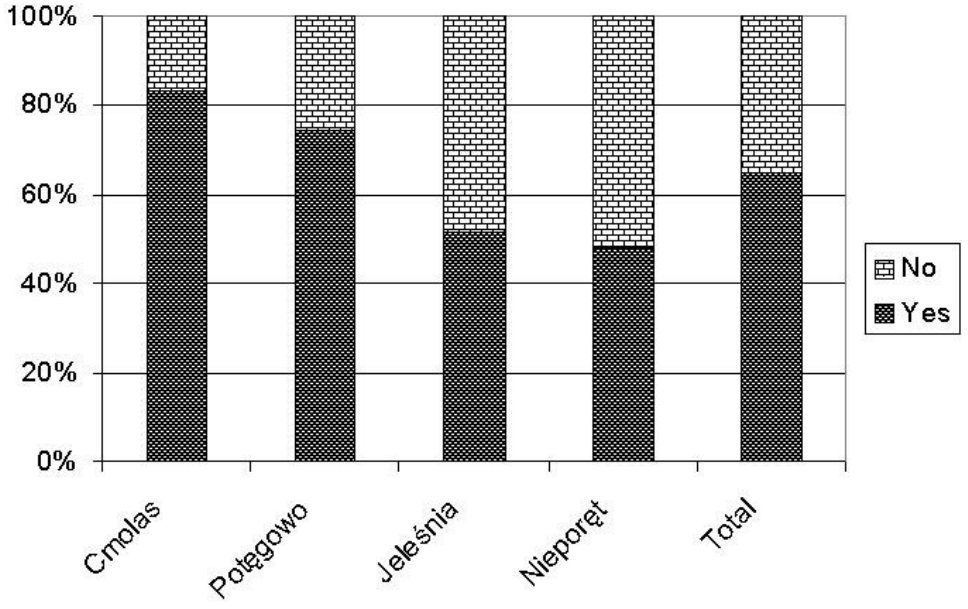

Fig. 10. Is someone from your closest relatives unemployed?

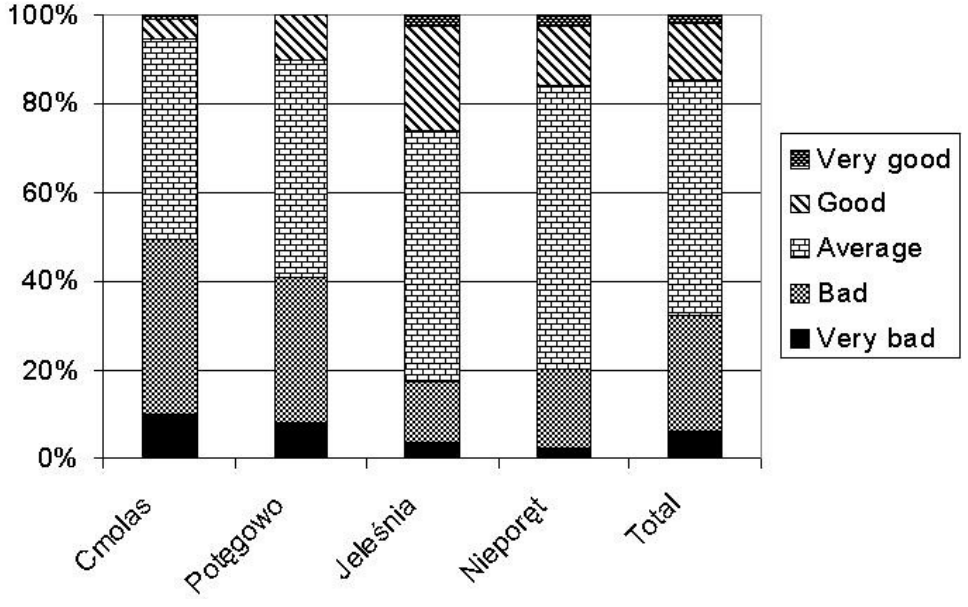

Fig. 11. Assessment of own financial status

The questioned were to choose three out of eight problems presented in official documents as needing to be solved quickly. The lack of job was recognized as the most important problem in all the examined communes (Fig. 12). More than 80 % of those surveyed pointed it out. Answers show great spatial disproportion – 95 % of indications in bioproductive communes (Cmolas and Potegowo) and 65 % in service ones (Jelesnia and Nieporet). The bad condition of roads appeared as another important problem as well as the lack of investments in the commune. It is striking that only 32 % of people pointed the latter matter out. It may show that they do not connect the lack of jobs with the lack of investors willing to create new enterprises. Only 20 % of those questioned thinks that pollution or the bad condition of cultural and educational institutions is a problem. Answers about the condition of water and sewerage infrastructure are very diversified spatially. Poor communication is a problem for about 15 %, whereas criminality concerns less than 10 % of surveyed. All the above presented problems cannot be solved at once for sure, however one should aspire to eliminate them progressively.

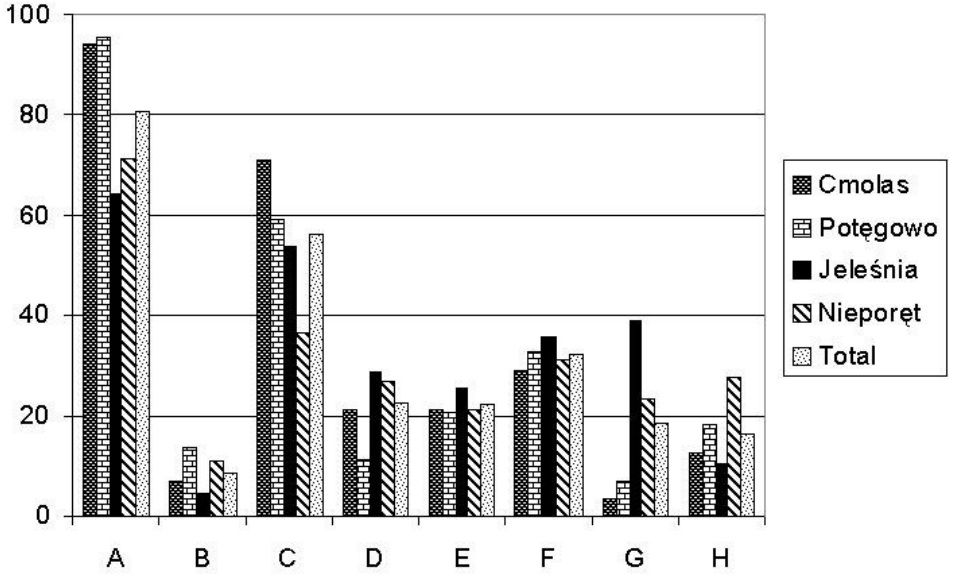

Fig. 12. The most important problems in the commune (% of indications)

A – lack of job, B – criminality, C – bad conditions of roads, D – pollution, E – bad condition of cultural and educational institutions, F – lack of investors, G – poor condition of water and sewerage infrastructure; H – poor communications

General assessment of living conditions in the commune confirmed earlier observed spatial diversification. The living conditions were rated the worst in communes with bioproductive functions – up to over 50 % of negative assessments in Potegowo (Fig. 13). In turn, in communes with service functions over 25 % of people assessed them positively (almost only as good ones). That is four times more than in Cmolas and Potegowo. These results are to a great ex-

tent dependent on aforementioned problems as material status and high unemployment rate. However, similarly to assessment of financial situation, the majority (over 60 %) gave neutral answers.

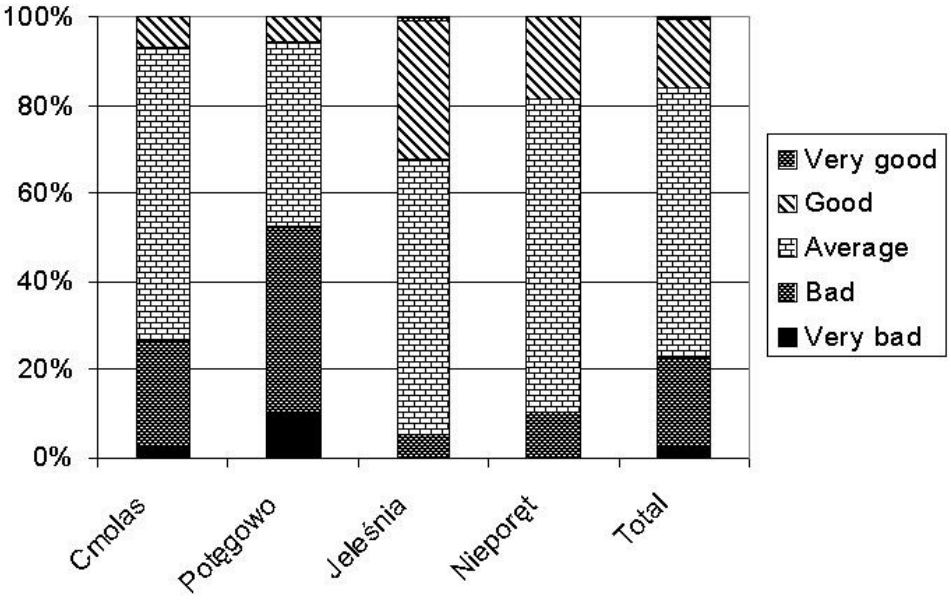

Fig. 13. Assessment of inhabitants' living conditions in the commune

CONCLUSIONS

The suspected relation between the area's function, infra-structural outfit and economic potential turned out to be true. Much lower values of W_{WZ} index characterize areas with dominance or co-dominance of the 1st sector of the economy than communes with greater importance of non-agricultural employment. However, the direction of this relation was not found. It was not clear whether development of non-agricultural functions depends on infra-structural outfit and economic potential, or if progress in infra-structural equipment and growth of economic potential occur due to these functions.

The tourist function can develop in coastal, lake and mountain areas and that is why tourism (or agro-tourism) cannot be the only solution for the problems of Polish rural areas. The residential function strictly depends on the circumstances for getting to work everyday, which restrains its range to suburban areas. That is why it can develop only in the neighbourhood of the biggest cities. Because of its greater extent than agriculture, forestry itself surely cannot cause improvement of living conditions. The industrial function plays a less and less important role because of the closing down of many factories. The agricultural function has a great inner diversity (intensive and extensive farming) which is dependent on historical and environmental situation. Agriculture treated only as a productive activity has no chance to support growth in areas with prevalence of this type of economy.

What kind of changes should be made? Most of all greater diversification of income sources in households with agricultural activity should be suggested. At present only 8.8 % of households runs both agricultural and non-agricultural (mainly industrial manufacture and trade) businesses (GUS 2003a). Households should manufacture farm products a little in order to sell them with a higher price.

The multifunctional role of agriculture should be distinguished, since, besides its productive functions, it also acts as a preservative, preventing and landscape factor, for which rural areas gain no money. This money could be destined for development of technical infrastructure, which surely would result in improvement of living conditions and the natural environment. It could also cause growth of the investment attractiveness of these areas (Jasiulewicz 2002, Kolodziejczyk 2002).

The European Union's funds, for which local authorities should apply, can help to improve the infrastructural outfit of the commune. As researches show more EU funds were used in communes where educated people were in charge (Węcławowicz et al. 2002). That is why higher demands for local political leaders are suggested.

Development of alternative but permanent sources of income is essential to aid progress in rural areas – especially in those with dominant agricultural functions, because according to researches the biggest support is necessary there. As shown in this paper, agricultural communes with non-agricultural function (class 4) are characterized by values of W_{WZ} index higher than the average for rural areas in Poland. Diversification of income sources led by inhabitants and authorities of so far monofunctional (agricultural) areas may result in greater resistance to fluctuations of product prices and economic circumstances. Small industrial manufacturing, craft, trade and services should be suggested as additional activities for these areas.

Finally, it is crucial to say that growth of rural areas should be related more closely to the regional development which includes urban areas as well. Towns have exogenous functions for their surrounding areas. They should be centres of growth for their neighbourhood because of the concentration effect (of population, infrastructure or management forces). Local economies comprising both inner and outer (also foreign) investors should develop vitally mainly in towns. Urban areas are naturally predisposed to create non-agricultural jobs on a greater scale than rural ones. Unfortunately, nowadays the towns themselves are exposed to many social and economic problems and that is why their exogenous functions are based only on services and not on creating additional work places for non-urban inhabitants of the region.

Analyses of the above presented survey results allow us to draw two conclusions. Firstly, some diversification of living conditions and financial status of inhabitants in bioproductive and service communes appear. It shows that creation and development of non-agricultural and exogenous functions significantly affect the improvement of living conditions. On the other hand a lot of problems that are common for every rural inhabitants independently of the place of living cannot be omitted. These problems include: lack of work, bad condition of roads and pavements, bad condition or lack of cultural and educational institu-

tions as well as general matters connected with the functionality of social and economic infrastructure. That is why detailed plans for the revitalization of rural areas are required. They should be suitable both for regional action and for the whole of Poland. Development and consequent popularization of self-organizing and initiative among rural inhabitants is very crucial as well.

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ŽIVOTNÉ PODMIENKY A FUNKČNÁ ŠTRUKTÚRA VIDIECKYCH OBCÍ V POĽSKU

Cieľom štúdie je definovať vzťahy medzi životnými podmienkami obyvateľov vidieka a funkciou vidieka. Zdá sa, že obce bez poľnohospodárskych funkcií majú lepšiu infraštruktúru a vyšší hospodársky potenciál. To podmieňuje zasa možnosti dosahovať úspech pri hľadaní alternatívnych zdrojov príjmu. Počas obdobia veľkých spoločenských a hospodárskych zmien sa životné podmienky v Poľsku zlepšovali rôzne. Preto je potrebné poznať názor obyvateľov vidieka o týchto procesoch.

Mnohé podrobné štúdie opisujú životné podmienky buď iba z demografického, alebo hospodárskeho hľadiska. Analýza v tomto príspevku vychádza z infraštruktúry a hospodárskeho potenciálu vidieka.

Široký pás sídiel, ktorý sa rozprestiera od Dolného Sliezska cez Veľkopoľsko a Kujawy až po región Kaszuby, je oblasťou s vyšším indexom životných podmienok.

Okrem toho vynikajú aj predmestia okolo Varšavy, Lodže, Čenstochovej, Krakova, Kielce, Rzeszova, Olszytynu a Štetína a prímestské oblasti Horného Sliezska. Aj okolo ostatných väčších miest sú životné podmienky vyššie ako je celoštátny priemer.

Životné podmienky závisia od funkcii obce. Najnižšie hodnoty indexu životných podmienok sú charakteristické pre oblasti s dominujúcimi poľnohospodárskymi funkciami, kým najvyššie sú typické pre obce, ktoré majú vyvinuté iné ako poľnohospodárske funkcie. Ale poľské poľnohospodárstvo je veľmi diverzifikované, čo má veľký vplyv na životné podmienky. Najvyššie hodnoty indexu životných podmienok sa vyskytli v oblastiach s prevahou iných ako poľnohospodárskych funkcií.

Turistická funkcia sa môže vyvinúť na pobreží, v horských alebo jazerných oblastiach, preto turistický ruch alebo agroturistika nemôžu byť jediným riešením pre problémy poľského vidieka. Obytná funkcia výlučne závisí na okolnostiach dennej dochádzky do zamestnania a obmedzuje sa len na predmestské oblasti. Preto sa môže vyvinúť len v susedstve najväčších miest. Lesníctvo, rozsahom väčšie ako poľnohospodárstvo, nemôže priniesť zlepšenie životných podmienok. Priemyselná funkcia zohráva čoraz menšiu úlohu a továrne sa zatvárajú. Poľnohospodárska funkcia má veľkú vnútornú rozmanitosť (intenzívne a extenzívne poľnohospodárstvo), závislú na historickej situácii. Poľ-nohospodárstvo chápané len ako výrobná činnosť nemôže podporiť vývoj oblastí, kde prevláda tento typ hospodárskej činnosti.

Aké zmeny je potrebné urobiť? Mala by sa zdôrazniť väčšia diverzifikácia zdrojov pre domácnosti, ktoré sa zaoberajú poľnohospodárskou činnosťou.

Okrem výrobnej funkcie je správne uznať aj polyfunkčnosť poľnohospodárstva, pretože zahŕňa faktor ochrany krajiny a jej zachovania, za ktorý nedostáva nijaké peniaze. Tieto peniaze by sa mohli vložiť do vybudovania technickej infraštruktúry, čo by určite viedlo k zlepšeniu životných podmienok a životného prostredia. Mohli by sa využiť aj na zvýšenie atraktivity týchto oblastí pre investorov.

Fondy EÚ, o ktoré miestne úrady môžu požiadať, pomôžu zlepšiť občianske vybavenie obcí. Ako ukazuje výskum, obce, na čele ktorých stoja vzdelaní funkcionári, získali viac europeňazí. To je dôvod klásť väčšie požiadavky na miestnych politických lídrov.

Vývoj alternatívnych, ale stálych zdrojov príjmu, má zásadný význam pri pomoci vidieku v jeho rozvoji – najmä v takých oblastiach, kde prevládajú poľnohospodárske funkcie, pretože, ako výskum ukázal, tam je potrebná najväčšia pomoc. Ako dokumentuje aj tento príspevok, pre poľnohospodárske obce s inou ako poľnohospodárskou funkciou sú charakteristické hodnoty indexu životných podmienok vyššie ako je priemer vidieka v Poľsku. Diverzifikácia zdrojov príjmu za pomoci obyvateľov a úradov doteraz monofunkčných (poľnohospodárskych) oblastí môže vyústiť do vyššej odolnosti voči fluktuácii cien poľnohospodárskych výrobkov a hospodárskych podmienok. Malé priemyselné výrobne, remeslá, obchod a služby môžu byť prídavnými činnosťami v týchto oblastiach.

Napokon treba poznamenať, že rast vidieka treba užšie spájať s regionálnym rozvojom, ktorý zahŕňa aj mestské oblasti. Mestá majú voči okolitej oblasti exogénnu funkciu. Mali by byť strediskami rastu pre svoje susedstvo, pretože v nich sa koncentruje obyvateľstvo, infraštruktúra a riadiace sily. Miestne hospodárstvo takto obsiahne vnútorných i vonkajších (aj zahraničných) investorov, ktorí môžu napomáhať rozvoju miest. Mestské oblasti majú prirodzený predpoklad na vytvorenie iných ako poľnohospodárskych pracovných miest vo väčšom meradle ako vidiek. Žiaľ, v súčasnosti sú samy mestá vystavené sociálnym a hospodárskym problémom, preto sa ich exogénna funkcia zakladá len na službách a nevytvárajú prídavné pracovné miesta pre obyvateľov vidieka v rámci ich regiónu.

Analýza vyššie uvedených výsledkov výskumu vedie k dvom záverom. Po prvé, medzi obyvateľmi biprodukívnych a so službami spojených obcí sa objavuje istá

diverzifikácia životných podmienok a finančného štatútu. Ukazuje sa, že vytvorenie a vývoj inej ako poľnohospodárskej a exogénnej funkcie významne ovplyvňuje zlepšenie životných podmienok. Na druhej strane nemožno prehliadnuť množstvo problémov, ktoré sú spoločné pre každého obyvateľa vidieka, bez ohľadu na miesto bydliska. Medzi týmito problémami je: nedostatok práce, zlý stav ciest a dlažieb, zlý stav alebo chýbajúce vzdelávacie a kultúrne zariadenia, ako aj všeobecné záležitosti spojené s funkčnosťou sociálnej a hospodárskej infraštruktúry. Preto je potrebné vypracovať podrobné a vhodné plány pre celé Poľsko na oživenie jeho vidieka. Pritom je podstatný aj rozvoj a spopularizovanie samosprávy, samoorganizácie a iniciatívy vidiečanov.

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