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THE CHANGE IN THE RURAL STANDARD OF LIVING DURING THE TRANSFORMATION PERIOD IN THE PODKARPACIE PROVINCE, POLAND

Abstract: The author uses the *Z*-scores method to investigate standards of living in rural gminas of the Podkarpackie Province during 1990-2000. Ten years into the Poland's transformation period, the developmental gap separating rural and urban gminas is slightly smaller, but the existing differences between the lowest and highest standards of living remained. When combined with the increase in the standard of living in some dozen rural gminas it seems that the role of spatial differences tends to increase. The greatest improvement in the standard of living was recorded in suburban gminas of the region's largest cities and along its main transport axis, the E-40 road. The agricultural gminas located in the Przemyskie Foothills and peripheral areas in the northeast of the province have remained the most backward

Key words: standard of living, southeastern Poland, rural development.

1. Introduction

The underdevelopment of the eastern Polish provinces features high on the list of issues involved in the country's unequal spatial development. A. Klasik (2000) went so far as to state that the greatest spatial challenge faced by Poland was the need to restructure traditional industrial areas and eliminate hidden rural unemployment. The latter is particularly true about the Podkarpackie Province. The region has the lowest urbanisation ratio in the country and a high rural population density. The fact that farming accounts for 48% of the total employment, but produces just below 5 % of the region's added value attests to the low efficiency and subsistent nature of the sector¹. The GDP *per capita* is just 75.9% of the national average making it the second poorest province (Czyż 2001). It therefore seemed worthwhile to attempt a study aiming to identify any changes in the standard of living in the rural areas by looking at the *gmina* structure (*gmina* is the smallest unit in the administrative division of Poland) of the Podkarpackie Province between 1990 and 2000.

Assuming that the Polish transformation processes were conducive to new spatial patterns this study answers the following research questions:

- What changes occurred in the rural living standards during 1990-2000?
- Did the differences between the urban and rural standard of living change and if so in what way?
- Where are the spatial concentrations of rural deprivation and relative welfare?

2. Methodology

Studies on standards of living can be based on hard measures using official statistics or soft measures using a questionnaires (Pacione 1986). Taking into account the large number of spatial units covered in the research and the dynamic approach applied, only data from the data bank of the Main Statistical Office and the Provincial Statistical Office of Rzeszów were deemed sufficient. The data was analysed using the method internationally known as *Z*-scores (Smith 1972), and locally as the Perkal's index (Chojnicki and Czyż 1991). The method involving building of a synthetic index as the sum of standardised values of the sub-indices is both simple and keeps information loss during aggregation to a minimum. For the purpose of the study the method of building the synthetic index of development (the index) has been slightly modified. In each unit, the minimum and the maximum values were excluded in each of the sub-indices. In this way, specific index values in certain gminas, caused by either high or low value of a single characteristic, were reduced while maintaining a large degree of compatibility with the "raw" index (correlation index for the gminas at 0.98)

Twelve characteristics were used to build the dynamic index of the standard of living in 1990 and 2000 (Tab. 1). The indices were carefully chosen to feature adequate spatial variation and different information value, while availability and comparability of characteristics in the given years were also taken into account. A similar procedure was followed when determining the standards of living in *powiats* (middle tier of Polish administrative division) of the Podkarpackie Province against the rest of the country in 2000. In this case, 22 characteristics were chosen while urban *powiats* were lumped together with their surrounding rural *powiats* by adding up the relevant source data². To better identify the relatively successful and deprived areas individual gminas were assigned the (+) or (-) signs relative to the provincial average.

¹ The main problem faced by the agricultural sector in the Podkarpackie Province is its fragmented spatial structure combined with the high numbers of employed per farm. The structure has long been characterised by the dominance of vary small farms. In 1996, as much as 80 percnent of all private farms were smaller than 5 hectares. One third of farms are owned by pensioners which adversely combines with the low level of education in agricultural communities and results in very slow farming modernisation rate, if at all. Even the better quality farming belt between the town of Łańcut and the city of Przemyśl the crops do not fully reflect the potential quality of the production space (see: Bański 2002).

² In many cases, separate investigation of the urban and surrounding rural *powiats* excessively favours the urban unit, as some of the services provided there are normally aimed at the rural *powiat* citizens too (e.g. hospital care and post-elementary schooling).

Tab. 1. Characteristics used to build the synthetic standard of living index

Tab. 1. Cechy wykorzystane w konstrukcji syntetycznego indeksu poziomu życia

No.	Index	Podkarpackie Province (1990-2000)	Poland (powiaty) (2000)
1	Proportion of population at the productive age		X
2	Divorces per 1000 inhabitants		X
3	Migration balance per 1 000* inhabitants	X	X
4	Unemployment rate		X
5	Rooms per 1 person	X	
6	Apartments per 1000 inhabitants (construction started in 2000)		X
7	Apartment useful surface area in m ² per person	X	X
8	Water consumption in m ³ per person	X	
9	Cinemas – index**	X	X
10	Library outlets – availability index***	X	X
11	Postal and communications outlets - availability index***		X
12	Kindergarten capacity per 1 000 children aged 3-6	X	X
13	Powiat sq. area per 1 locality with a grammar school (km ²)		X****
14	Pharmacies - availability index***	X	X
15	Dentists per 10 000 inhabitants	X	
16	Surgeons per 10 000 inhabitants	X	X
17	Population per 1 hospital bed in general hospitals		X
18	Cancer deaths per 1000 inhabitants		X
19	Infant mortality per 1 000 live births*	X	X
20	Gas emissions per 100 km ²		X
21	Proportion of population served by sewage treatment plants		X
22	Total gmina income <i>per capita</i> *		X
23	Landline telephone subscribers	X	X
24	Average gross monthly salary in PLN		X
25	Companies registered under REGON system per 1000 inhabitants at production age		X

* three-year average used for calculation

** the cinema index is defined as a mean value of standardised number of cinemas per 10 000 inhabitants and the audience figures per 10 000 inhabitants

*** the availability index is defined as a mean of the following standardised characteristics: number of outlets per 10 000 inhabitants and per 100 km² of the gmina's (powiat's) area

**** children in kindergartens per 100 places

* do wartości wskaźnika wzięto średnią z trzech lat

**indeks dostępności jest średnią ze standaryzowanych cech: liczby danych placówek na 10 000 mieszkańców i na 100 km² powierzchni gminy (powiatu)

***indeks kin jest średnią ze standaryzowanych wartości liczby kin na 10 000 mieszkańców i liczby widzów na 10 000 mieszkańców

**** dzieci w przedszkolach na 100 miejsc

3. Standards of living in Podkarpackie powiats and the rest of Poland

During the Communist era, Poland's spatial standard of living distribution included the better-developed western and northern regions and the less developed eastern and southeastern regions. After 1989, new spatial patterns emerged during the transformation period (Węclawowicz 1996, Gorzelak 1998, 1999). The large urban and metropolitan areas became the new 'winners', while the northern and north-eastern regions, formerly dominated by large state-owned farms came out less fortunate. As a result, many of the powiats that were relatively well developed during 1980s recorded lower development index values than the economically lagging eastern Poland.

More than two-thirds of all Podkarpackie powiats are below the Polish average standard of living index (Fig. 1). This places the province among the less-well developed regions alongside the Podlaskie and Świętokrzyskie provinces, but still above the Kujawsko-Pomorskie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie provinces. The characteristics particularly affecting the Podkarpackie powiats' index values included low entrepreneurship activity, low telephone line saturation and low per capita income, low gross salaries and weak construction activity. Only one-fourth or less of all powiats recorded index values above the national average in these categories. The Podkarpackie powiats came out favourably only in overall health condition, environmental status, availability of medical services and in the number of divorces.

Four of the Podkarpackie Province powiats were in the bottom 20% index value powiats of the whole Poland (notably only one in the bottom 10%) and three in the top 20%. The powiats with low standard of living were found in the north-east of the province, previously (prior to the latest administrative reform in 1999) part of the Przemyskie province (lubaczowski powiat) and to the west of the provincial capital of Rzeszów (kolbuszowski, ropczycko-sędziszowski and strzyżowski powiats). The area with low standard of living continued into the adjacent Lubelskie province. Within the Podkarpackie Province, three powiats compared favourably: rzeszowski, krośnieński and stalowowolski. During the last five years, there were four powiats with higher-than-national average of living standards improvement: mielecki and stalowowolski powiats recovering from their collapse during the initial transformation phase, as well as the border powiats of przemyski and jarosławski.

4. Changes in the standard of living in rural gminas during 1990-2000

An urban vs. rural dichotomy was the principal feature of the spatial variation in the standard of living in the Podkarpackie Province in 1990. While this pattern has been documented in multiple projects in other areas to be of nation-wide nature (Ciechocińska 1985, Jałowiecki 1987, Chojnicki and Czyż 1991, Guzik 1996) the disparities recorded in the Podkarpackie Province are particularly acute. The average standard of living index in towns was several times higher than in rural areas ($\bar{X} = 10.5$ in urban areas compared to $\bar{X} = -2.51$ in rural gminas). In 1990, the rural areas scored particularly low in health care, telephone saturation and migration balance. The average provincial index values were marginally exceeded in the categories of usable area

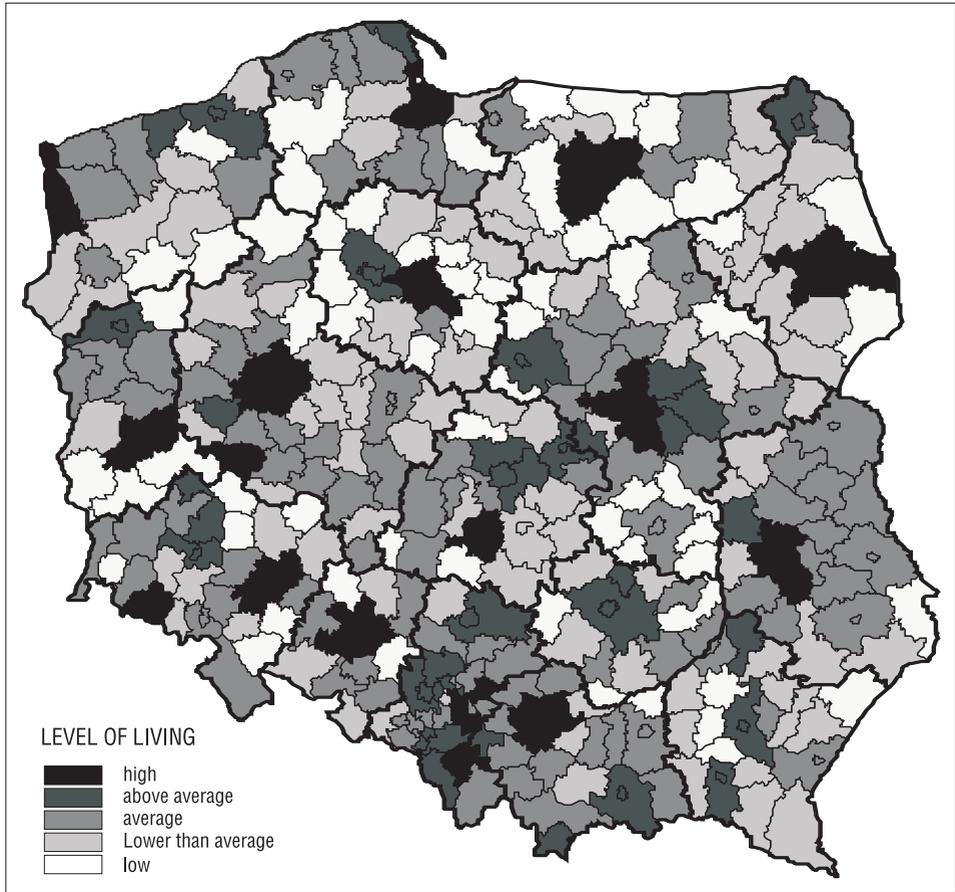


Fig. 1. Level of living in Polish poviats in 2000

Ryc. 1. Poziom życia w powiatach Polski w 2000 r.

Source: Author's research.

of apartments and in libraries. Among the top 20 best developed gminas of the province there were no rural units. The best index value in the rural gminas was recorded in tourist and spa gminas (Solina, Horyniec) and in some suburban gminas near the towns of Łańcut and Rzeszów. The lowest standard of living was typically recorded in gminas with the dominant small and fragmented farming, particularly located in the eastern parts of the region.

The spatial dimension of the standard of living reveals certain areas with lower-than-average development indices (Fig. 2):

- Almost the entire former Przemyskie province (excluding the towns and gminas Cieszanów and Horyniec), with the minimum index values recorded within

the Przemyskie Foothills and Dynowskie Foothills, as well as in rural gminas surrounding the town of Jarosław.

- A north-western crescent curving from around the town of Nisko in the north to the town of Jasło in the south (also known as the western underdeveloped crescent').
- A group of gminas near Sieniawa in the north and the south-easternmost gminas in the Bieszczady Mts.

A feature worth noting is that the rural gminas adjacent to the larger towns in the region had development indices no higher than medium. Most of those towns, with the exception

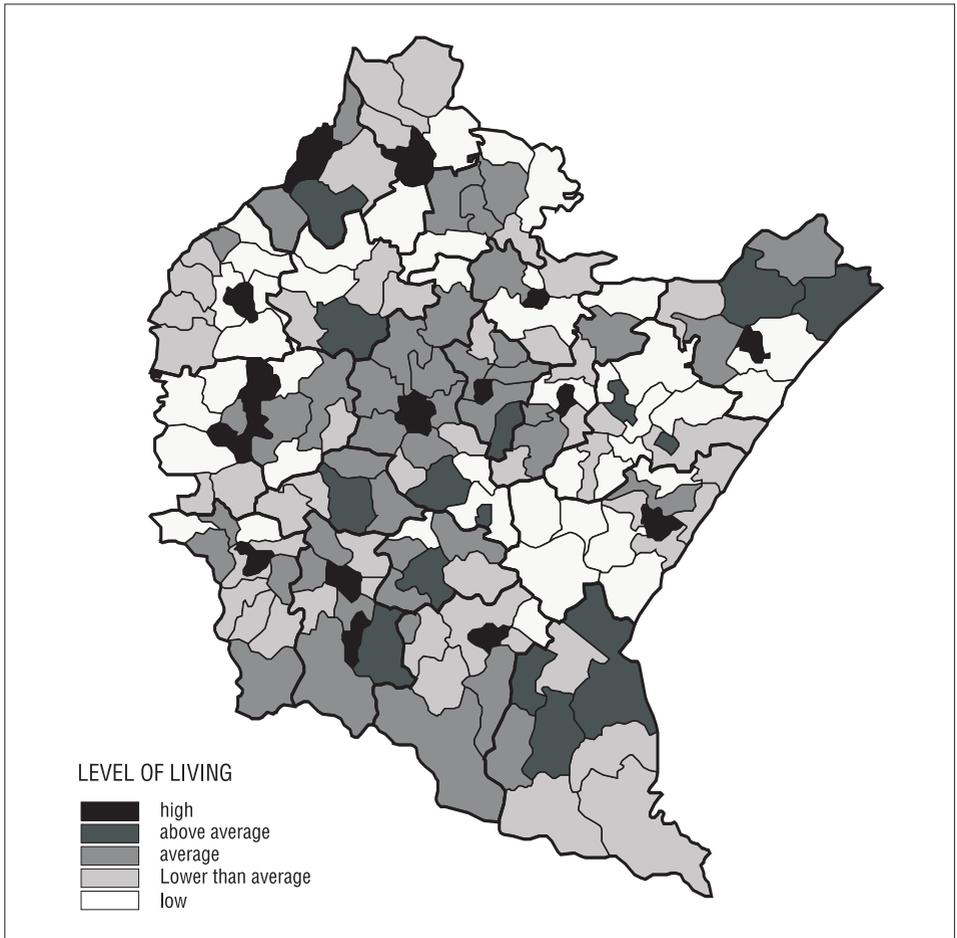


Fig. 2. Level of living in gminas of Podkarpackie Region in 1990

Ryc. 2. Poziom życia w gminach województwa podkarpackiego w 1990 r.

of Rzeszów, had not generated sufficient stimuli for the development of their suburban zones during the Communist era. It must, however, be underscored that the proximity of towns had a significant impact on the availability of services and non-agricultural jobs.

In 2000, the scale of variations in the standard of living index has changed (Fig. 3). Although the overall difference between the urban and rural gminas dropped slightly, (Tab. 2), six rural gminas, mostly adjacent to the towns of Rzeszów (Trzebownisko, Boguchwała, Krasne) and Krosno (Krościenko Wyżne and Miejsce Piastowe), rose to the top 20% in the standard of living category. Generally, the gminas that gained

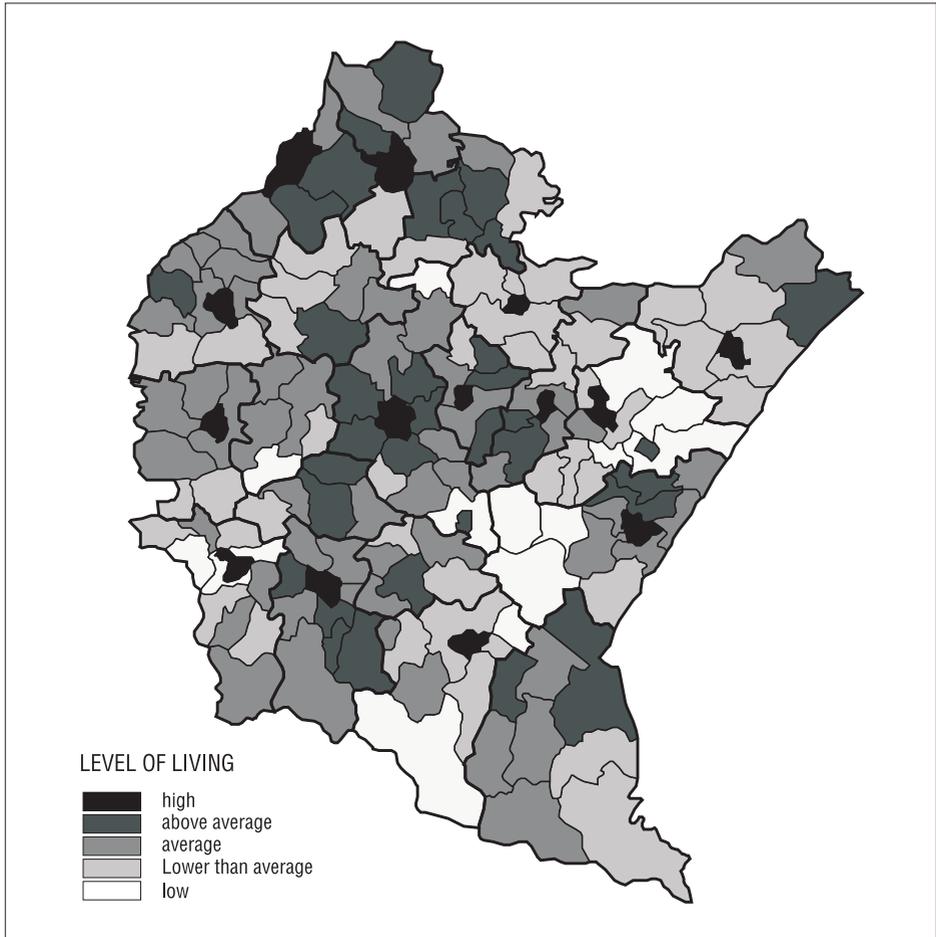


Fig. 3. Level of living in gminas of Podkarpackie Region in 2000

Ryc. 3. Poziom życia w gminach województwa podkarpackiego w 2000 r.

Tab. 2. Mean standard of living index values in gmina types

Tab. 2. Średnie wartości indeksu poziomu życia według rodzaju gmin

Gmina type	Urban gminas		Urban/rural gminas		Rural gminas		Total gminas	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Year	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Percentage of provincial population	33.50	31.00	20.50	20.00	46.00	49.00	100.00	100.00
Mean index value	10.50	10.61	2.06	1.22	-2.51	-0.95	0.00	0.00
Median and mean for gminas in top 20% index value	—	—	—	—	—	—	Me=5.97 X=7.15	Me=6.56 X=8.81
Median and mean for gminas in bottom 20% index value	—	—	—	—	—	—	Me=(-4.87) X=(-5.00)	Me=(-3.23) X=(-3.65)

Source: Author's research.

in the standard of living index included suburban units around the towns of Rzeszów, Przemyśl, Krosno and Stalowa Wola. Standards of living also improved along the main transit route of the province combining the E-40 road and the Cracow-Lviv railway line, thus splitting the 'western underdeveloped crescent' through the middle. The standard of living improvement along the corridor between the towns of Krosno and Rzeszów, and between Rzeszów and Jarosław shows the impact of accessibility as a trigger of local development.

The lowest index values continue to persist in the eastern part of the province (except for the city of Przemyśl and its suburban zone). Within this area, a group of gminas on both sides of the przemyski and brzozowski powiats scores particularly low. In comparison to 1990, there has been a drop in the index values in the southern part of the province, and particularly in the jasielski and sanocki powiats.

Generally, when compared to 1990, there was an improvement in the standards of living in rural gminas with improvements in technical infrastructure, including telephone lines and sewage system provision, in particular. Also there was a growth in the housing resources. These improvements were accompanied by growing disparities in rural areas expressed among others by the fact that 20% of the weakest gminas recorded stagnation or much slower growth rate, as compared to all rural gminas in the indices of health care availability and in telephone lines and housing resources.

5. Multiple deprivation areas

Alongside the standard of living index, it is also useful to identify areas with multiple characteristics below the average value. For the purpose of the study it was assumed that areas with three or more characteristics scored below the regional average would be regarded as the multiple deprivation areas. In 1990, thus-defined areas covered more than one-third of the province and just below one quarter of the population (Tab. 3). The deprived areas included no urban gminas, but nearly half of all rural gminas. Overlapping with the low index values, the deprived areas demonstrated the underdevelopment of the former

Tab. 3. Multiple deprivation areas in the Podkarpackie Province

Tab. 3. Obszary wielokrotnej deprivacji w województwie podkarpackim

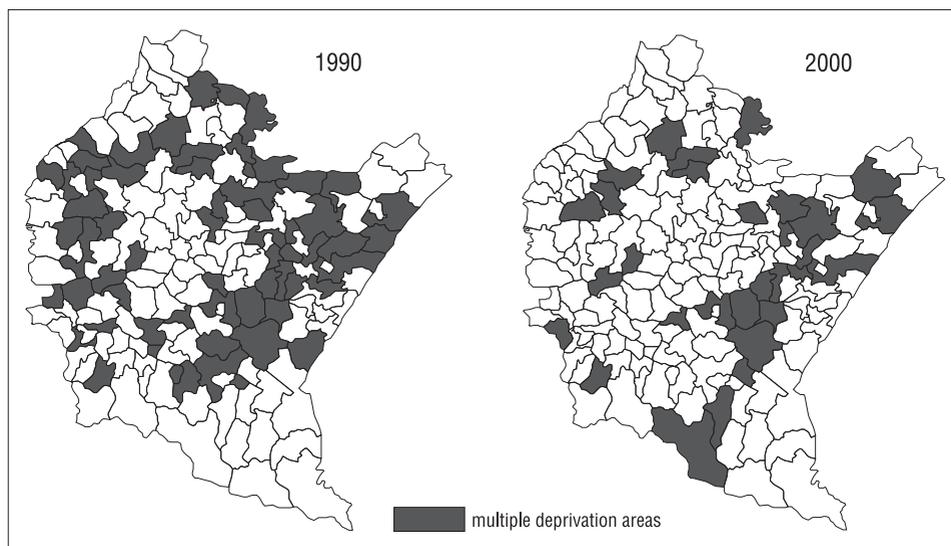
Year	Percentage of province area	Percentage of province population	Percentage of multiply deprived rural gminas
1990	36,4	23,54	48,2
2000	22,2	11,2	24,3

Source: Author's research.

Przemyskie province (except the city of Przemyśl itself and its suburban area) and the “western underdeveloped crescent” in 1990.

Ten years later, the pattern has changed considerably (Fig. 4). In 2000, the multiple deprivation areas shrank to a half of what they were in 1990 and covered just a little more than 11% of the population and 20% of the area. This beneficial reduction, however, focused in the western part of the province, while the Przemyskie Foothills' locations did not improve. Among the 28 units identified were three urban/rural gminas, i.e. the north-eastern gminas of Cieszanów and Sieniawa, and Zagórz in the Beskid Niski mountain range, which could reflect a stagnation of those small towns.

Placed against a broader backdrop of social and economic indicators most of the deprived areas also feature demographic and agricultural issues. This produces



Source: Author's research.

Fig. 4. Multiple deprivation areas in Podkarpackie in 1990 and 2000

Ryc. 4. Obszary wielokrotnej deprivacji w województwie podkarpackim w 1990 i 2000 r.

a multiple combination of adverse effects considerably hampering development. The areas of multiple deprivation identified in this study largely coincide with problem areas of south-eastern Poland identified by Bański (2000, 2002), putting additional barriers before development or even causing negative development in the overlap areas.

6. Contemporary conditions of life in rural gminas of the Podkarpackie Province

The generally low standards of living in the rural areas of the Podkarpackie Province are a result of both a historical backwardness of this land and the way space was developed during the Communist era. Indeed, rural areas, especially those dominated by private owned land (typical in most gminas in the province), developed at a very slow pace with the only exceptions of villages located in urbanised and industrialised areas, as well as localities with state owned farms. Consequently, rural areas suffered in two ways: because of their peripheral location in relation to the country's main industrial centres and because of their agrarian structure.

During 1990-2000, the changes identified have confirmed in the province the importance of new developmental stimuli in rural Poland, i.e. proximity of large urban centres and of main transport routes. An important role was also played by spatial accessibility to social services and infrastructure, two aspects not dealt with in this study. This is particularly true about the access to post-elementary education (see Guzik et. al. 2002). As a result, the standards of living in suburban gminas and those along main transport routes are higher than shown in this study. The direct and indirect benefits of the suburban location are additionally boosted as a result of a trend (Dicken 1998, Domański 2000), long-observed in highly industrialised countries, whereby the actively developing manufacturing businesses favoured locations near to rather than inside larger towns (in this case mainly Rzeszów and Krosno). Also, the majority of local economic development programmes were carried out in the western part of the province (e.g. the *Strug Valley* including four gminas near Rzeszów: Błazowa, Chmielnik, Hyżne and Tyczyn).

Nevertheless, most areas, particularly in the eastern part of the province, feature an effect referred to by Gorzelak (1999) as the “negative continuation”, and caused by their peripheral location and the employment structure dominated by the inefficient farming. For such cases, the literature abounds with suggestions of multi-functional development, tapping into an environmental potential and location, especially with tourism in mind (incl. Turnock 2000, Górz and Jedut 2000, *Województwo Podkarpackie 2000*). But the feasibility of multifunctional development of rural areas is highly debatable in areas with low entrepreneurship, hidden unemployment (estimated by various sources at between 270 000 and 320 000 in the Podkarpackie province), average tourist appeal and inadequate infrastructure. The additional barrier to the development of these areas is their very limited potential by the local population to accumulate capital, as a result of the restricted work commuting options³, as well as inadequate farming performance and its generally bad condition as a sector of economy.

The proximity of the national border had a mixed and difficult to assess effect on the standards of living in the rural gminas (see Sobala-Gwosdz 2000, 2003). Throughout the Communist era, the eastern Polish border was 'a scar of history', to use Alfred Moser's words (quote from Trościak 1999), and the local border areas counted among the most neglected and backward. 1990s marked a shift in the effect of the national border on these areas and an opportunity to turn their peripheral location into an advantage for accelerated development and catching up with other areas. If this were to be measured by the ratio of companies per 1000 inhabitants and its changes in time, than the opportunity has only been taken by a small number of gminas. The whole of the former Przemyskie province has low entrepreneurship ratios, with the notable exception of gminas belonging to the bieszczadzki and sanocki powiaty, as well as the urban areas. Medyka, Żurawica, Przemyśl and Orły are the only rural gminas with considerable development of companies serving the eastern market. This effect is confirmed by the spatial pattern of benefits from border proximity concentrating in the urban centres and their suburban zones, particularly near Rzeszów, Przemyśl and Jarosław. Whether the location directly on the border can significantly transform the local reality will be seen in a few years time in Radymno where a strategic border crossing Korczowa/Krakowiec was opened in 1999; the crossing is particularly important for the Ukraine and is to become the main road crossing to Ukraine, as well as a crossing point of a motorway to Kiev and Moscow. In 2000, no significant increase in the entrepreneurship ratio was recorded and it will be a matter of the time whether the crossing will jolt the development in Radymno and neighbouring gminas or not.

7. Conclusions

During the transformation period, there has been a modification of the existing spatial distribution of the standards of living. The identified patterns include:

- Improved standards of living in suburban gminas near the region's largest cities (mainly Rzeszów, Przemyśl and Stalowa Wola).
- Slight reduction of the distance between the rural and urban gminas, but maintaining the existing differences between the lowest and highest standard of living. This points to a diminishing role of the urban-versus-rural gminas dichotomy and the growing disparities between the suburban versus peripheral.
- Shrinking deprivation areas, particularly in the western part of the province, and continued low standard of living in peripheral gminas in the northern-eastern and south-eastern part of the province.

The author is of the opinion that the existing differences in the standard of living between areas of the province are going to grow and any increase in the standard of living in the backward gminas will largely depend on a success of potential growth centres

³ During the Communist era, dual occupation was wide spread in the province, as supported by extensive company-subsidised transport systems. Employment reductions and shedding personnel transport operations by the restructured companies affected mainly those farmer-cum-laboureres.

(some of the region's larger towns) or the growth axis (the E-40 road). It seems that the structural background to the deprivation effect in the identified areas condemns the local grass-root initiatives to failure, thus pointing to a need of an active regional policy.

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Zmiany poziomu życia w gminach wiejskich województwa podkarpackiego w okresie transformacji

Streszczenie

W oparciu o metodę sum standaryzowanych, czyli tzw. wskaźnik Perkala lub Z-scores autorka bada zmiany poziomu życia w dekadzie 1990-2000 w gminach wiejskich województwa podkarpackiego. Okres transformacji zmodyfikował na obszarze województwa podkarpackiego istniejący układ przestrzennego rozkładu poziomu życia. Największy wzrost poziomu życia w stosunku do 1990 roku zanotowano w podmiejskich gminach największych miast regionu (zwłaszcza Rzeszowa, Przemyśla i Stalowej Woli) oraz gminach położonych wzdłuż głównej osi komunikacyjnej regionu – drogi E-40 Dębica-Rzeszów-Łańcut-Jarosław-Przemyśl-Medyka. Obszarami zapóźnionymi pozostają rolnicze gminy Pogórza Przemyskiego oraz peryferyjne obszary na północnym-wschodzie województwa. W badanym okresie nastąpiło nieznaczne zmniejszenie się dystansu rozwojowego gmin wiejskich ogółem względem miast ogółem, przy zachowaniu istniejących różnic pomiędzy gminami o najgorszym i najwyższym poziomie życia. Świadczy to o malejącej roli dychotomii: gminy miejskie a gminy wiejskie, na rzecz wzrostu zróżnicowań przestrzennych: gminy podmiejskie a gminy peryferyjne. Zaobserwowano również zmniejszanie się obszarów deprywacji (definiowanych tu jako obszary gdzie mniej niż 1/3 przyjętych wskaźników cząstkowych osiąga przeciętną dla

regionu), szczególnie w zachodniej części województwa, przy jednoczesnym utrzymywaniu się niskiego poziomu życia w peryferyjnych gminach w północno - i południowo-wschodniej części województwa. Zdaniem autorki istniejące różnice w poziomie życia pomiędzy poszczególnymi obszarami województwa będą się pogłębiać, a wzrost poziomu życia w gminach zapóźnionych uzależniony będzie w dużej mierze od pomyślnego rozwoju obszarów mogących pełnić rolę ośrodków wzrostu, bądź osi wzrostu (droga E-40). Wydaje się, że strukturalne podłoże zjawiska deprivacji wyróżnionych terenów województwa skazuje podejmowane w nich oddolne inicjatywy na niepowodzenie, stąd konieczność prowadzenia aktywnej polityki regionalnej.

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