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THE LEVEL OF LIVING AND THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN CRACOW URBAN REGION

1. Introduction

The research on the level of living and quality of life in the geography of Poland has had a relatively short tradition [Zborowski, 1989, 2005; Chojnicki, Czyż, 1992; Liszewski, 1995]. This *status quo* is due to several reasons of ideological, theoretical and methodological nature. Lack of proper source documents is also one of the reasons. The latter has led to the absence of research on the spatial differentiation of the quality of life and the level of living in the Polish city from a thorough perspective. However, the respective dimensions or domains of the level of living and the quality of life are depicted in the literature extensively, which offers papers devoted to housing, job market and unemployment, healthcare, crime and education. A separate group is composed of papers analysing environmental protection in urban areas and its elements.

The basic concepts of the level of living and quality of life which are used by geographers (also sociologists and economists) are enriched with diverse matters, which makes the research more difficult. An additional limitation is formed by fairly colloquial understanding of concepts of the level of living and the quality of life, as well as of related concepts. They are often understood as synonyms. Hence, there emerges the need for discussion on the basic concepts, definitions and terms used in the Polish geography, in research encompassing the concepts of level of living and the quality of life.

In the present study, the author understands the level of living as the level of satisfaction of human needs resulting from consumption of material goods and services, and concerning the basic needs a human being has. In turn, the quality of life consists of all the elements of a human being's life which are related to the fact of being a "somebody" and experiencing various emotional

states deriving from the fact of having a family, having friends or colleagues, etc. [Słaby, 1990].

The categories of the level of living and the quality of life are semantically separate. The level of living describes certain state or level of satisfaction of human needs. This category is of objective character, contrary to subjective assessments of the quality of life. It is important to mention that the term "quality of life" is approached from two perspectives: 1) from a narrow perspective as a subjective assessment of the level of living, and 2) from a broader perspective as entirety of living conditions estimated in objective and subjective categories [Ostasiewicz, 2002; Zborowski, 2005]. This distinction between the level of living and the quality of life is also applied further in this paper. Research on the level and quality of living is connected with articulation of human needs. Although these terms belong to the classics of theoretical and methodological social sciences, still there is no overall or coherent theory of needs [Bywalec, Rudnicki, 1992]. Needs should be associated with a human being's (individualist's) experience of lack or shortage of something, also with experience of the excess of "things", which are proper for the human being or the feeling of inadequate self-actualisation level as far as biological, social, psychological and spiritual domains are concerned. Systematization of needs according to urgency of their satisfaction is the most common classification method. Generally, one can distinguish between the basic, rudimental needs, also called natural or physiological. These needs are related to the physical existence of the human being (water, air, food, clothing, shelter). The second group of needs is composed of the so-called higher needs. Among them one can find social, cultural and psychological needs which are a result of the individual's life in a group, activities, feelings and impressions of the individual.

One of the most famous typologies is that by A. Maslow (Fig. 1), which is usually shown as the so-called needs hierarchy pyramid [Maslow, 1990; Zimbardo, 1999]. The base of the pyramid is made of physiological needs which are followed by safety needs (security of health, security of employment, moral and physiological security), followed by needs of love and belongingness (having a family, belonging to social circles, belonging to an organisation or to a chosen society), esteem and status needs (recognition of one's competence, achievements and success, but also the value of one's deeds), self-actualisation needs (realising one's dreams, carrying out one's plans, aiming for perfection, justice, the meaning of life). To the five above-mentioned groups A. Maslow added a level of transcendence which is the highest in the hierarchy. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is based on the hypothesis that human needs are of a hierarchical nature. If the basic needs, put in the base of the pyramid, are not satisfied, then the individual will ignore the needs higher in the hierarchy. When the lower level needs are satisfied, then the individual does not have them any longer, which leads to intensification of needs higher in the hierar-

chy. Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs has been criticised broadly. Some of the arguments concerned Maslow's rigid sequence of satisfying the needs which led from the lowest to the highest needs in the hierarchy.

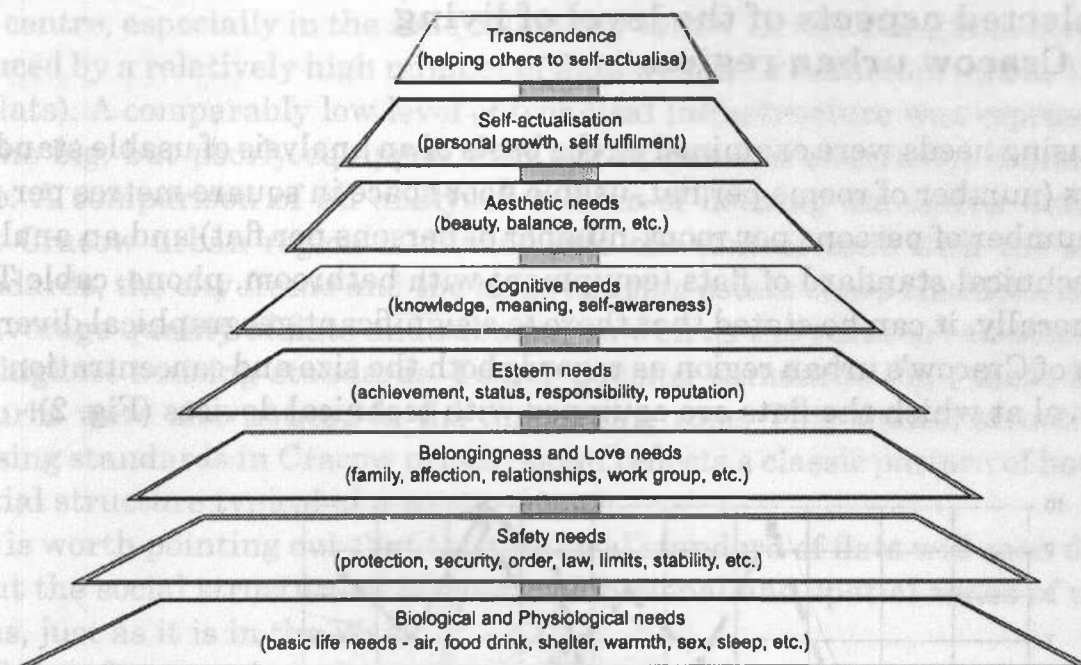


Fig. 1. Hierarchy of needs pyramid

Source: Zimbardo, 1999.

The goal of the present study is to show the process of social polarisation in a big city on the basis of a case study of Cracow urban region. These processes were investigated through an analysis of chosen aspects of the level of living and the quality of life. The level of living was analysed based on an assessment of housing need satisfaction and an assessment of the level at which flats were equipped with domestic appliances. Moreover, also Cracow's spatial differentiation of poverty and crime and of unemployment level was analysed. The quality of life was examined, basing on the inhabitants' level of satisfaction related to various areas of activity. Such a layout allows assessing the level at which inhabitants' basic needs are satisfied. Also, this layout offers an opportunity to analyse the assessment of individuals' satisfaction related to the higher needs.

Source documents used in this study were collected during research carried out as interviews in 3, 846 households. The research penetrated into ten functional and spatial zones in Cracow urban region: city centre I, city centre II, city frame, large housing estates broken down into Cracow and Nowa Huta, the old suburbs, Nowa Huta district centre new suburban housing estates, rural urban fringe and the commuting zone [Zborowski 2000, 2005]. The analysis of poverty, crime and unemployment level was conducted, basing on the fol-

lowing studies: Mydel, Kozimor, 1989; Pabian 2004; Prawelska-Skrzypek, Porębski, 2003.

2. Selected aspects of the level of living in Cracow urban region

Housing needs were examined on the basis of an analysis of usable standard of flats (number of rooms per flat, usable floor space in square metres per person, number of persons per room, number of persons per flat) and an analysis of a technical standard of flats (equipment with bathroom, phone, cable TV).

Generally, it can be stated that there is a significant geographical diversification of Cracow's urban region as regards both the size and concentration and the level at which the flats are equipped with technical devices (Fig. 2).

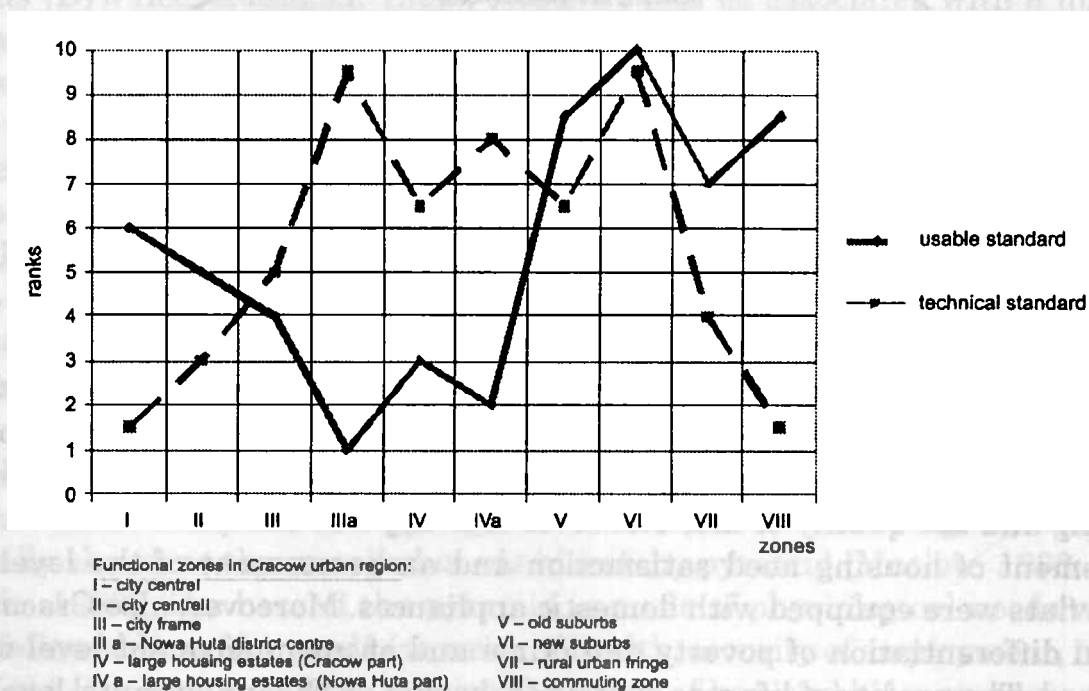


Fig. 2. Technical and usable standards of flats in Cracow urban region in 2000

Source: author's own elaboration based on data from [Zborowski, 2005].

This led to considerable spatial polarisation of the region. The centre of Nowa Huta district and the new suburban zone were found to be the regions enjoying the best technical standard. These zones, however, differ significantly as regards the usable standard of the flats. Nowa Huta flats usually do not exceed the area of 50 m² compared to new suburbs, where the usable area was three times bigger (about 140 m²). Multi-family housing estates were also of high technical standard, similar to the new suburbs, where the flats were spacious at the same time. The biggest contrast between the usable standard

(size of a flat) and technical standard occurred in the central zones, where inhabitants of big flats were often devoid of elementary conveniences. In the above-mentioned zones the flats were spacious but with just a few rooms, which caused a relatively high density of things and people in them. In the city centre, especially in the zone called city centre II, the living standard was reduced by a relatively high number of flats without a bathroom (about 10% of all flats). A comparably low level of technical infrastructure was represented by the big, but poorly equipped with water, gas and electricity, commuting zone. A comparison of all analysed indices of housing standards indicates that Cracow urban region is divided into the central zone with the lowest standards, the city frame and the large housing estate zones characterised by an average quality of flats and suburbs, as well as the rural urban zone with the highest housing standards. Poorer housing standards than those in the suburbs were also noticed in the commuting zone. This spatial structure of housing standards in Cracow urban region reflects a classic pattern of housing spatial structure typical of a western town.

It is worth pointing out that the technical standard of flats will soon decide about the social structure of respective functional and spatial zones of urban areas, just as it is in the West.

While a flat, together with its standard, satisfies the basic needs, equipping the flat with household appliances leads to satisfaction of higher needs (education, recreation, reduction of effort and time consumption related to household duties). Quantity and quality of various devices influence the opportunity to satisfy the needs, as well as satisfaction with housing standards [Gutkowska, Ozimek, Laskowski, 2001].

Five aspects of material standards of households were researched: 1) material standard I – equipment in the household appliances (percentage of households having a dishwasher, a better vacuum cleaner, a washing machine); 2) material standard II – households with “traditional” electronic devices (percentage of households equipped with stereo radio, colour TV set, tape recorder, video recorder); 3) material standard III – a new generation electronic equipment (percentage of households equipped with video cameras, computers, stereo sets); 4) material standard IV – means of transport (percentage of households with cars); 5) material standard V – recreational property (percentage of households having a summer cottage, an allotment with “a second home”) (Fig. 3).

Generally, one can notice a high concentration of household appliances (especially of new generation equipment) in new suburban households. It is clearly seen when taking a closer look at the relation between the level at which households are equipped with household appliances and the material situation of respective families. Large housing estates in Nowa Huta and in Cracow districts were also rich in household appliances, which shows explicitly that these households enjoy quite a good material standing. Contrary to

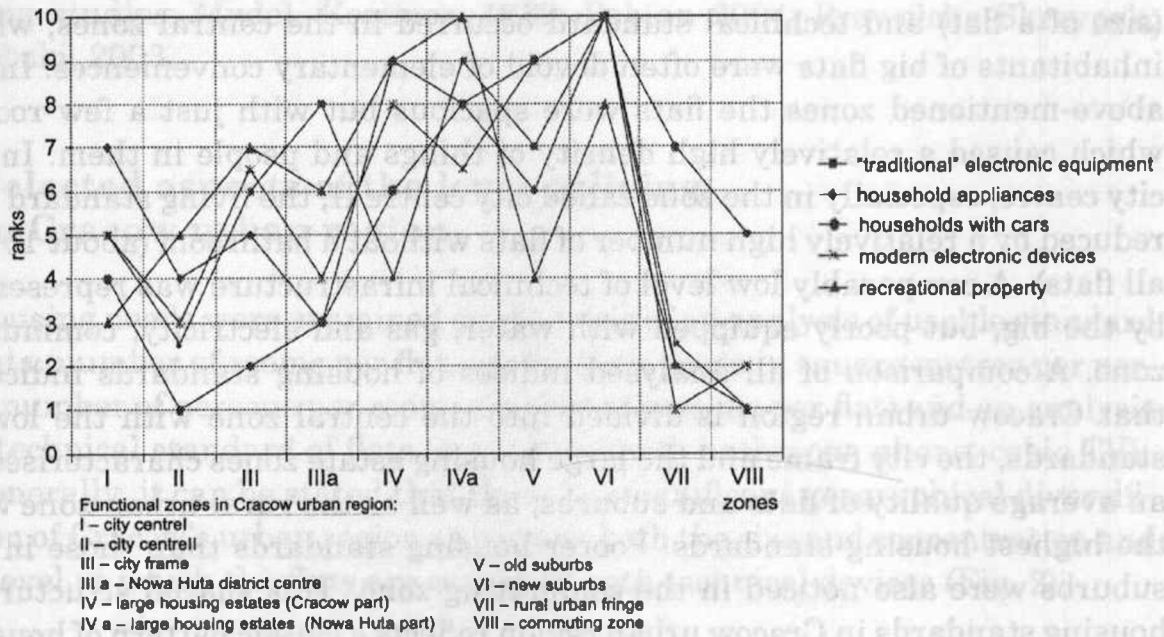


Fig. 3. Durable goods and household equipment in Cracow urban region in 2000

Source: author's own elaboration based on data from [Zborowski, 2005].

Nowa Huta housing estates, flats in its centre had poor outfit. Only the rural urban fringe and the commuting zone were in a worse state. The low level of fulfilment of the need for having household appliances should be linked to difficult financial situation of the families living in Nowa Huta and in the peripheries of Cracow.

Devices belonging to the group of electronic appliances can be divided into two groups according to the frequency with which they are found in households. The first group comprises standard durable goods or goods which can often be found in households such as: colour TV, stereo radio, tape recorder, video recorder and camera. The second group includes still more luxurious goods that are less often seen there: video camera, computer and stereo set.

The level at which flats are equipped with electronic devices across the urban area did not differ from that commonly recorded in Poland. It was found, however, that there is a considerable diversity of the equipment across flats as regards more and less common equipment, especially. Flats in the new suburbs stood definitely out as they were better equipped than in all the remaining zones. Large housing estate zones were also found rich in equipment. The research showed that in flats in the centre of Cracow urban region there were fewer electronic devices. This should be connected to the poor financial condition of families living in the central city, but also with advanced ageing processes and stages of family life cycle observed there. Some of the most modern devices were for many reasons not qualified as needed in a household. Lower income and worse education undoubtedly relate to small popularity of new generation equipment in the peripheries.

The next category of analysed assets was composed of household consumption durables linked to mobility, *i.e.* cars. In the 1990s, the popularity of cars increased dynamically. A similar trend could be noticed in Cracow at the same time. It is essential to mention that the highest increase in the number of cars took place in the peripheries. The dynamics of this process was due to several factors: an easier access to cheap, older cars, fewer connections in the rural urban fringe and in the commuting zone, improvement of local roads, more people commuting from the peripheries and especially from the commuting zone to the centre of Cracow [Zborowski, 2002]. A car, which not so long ago was a wealth and higher life standard symbol, became an indispensable means of transport. The majority of families from the rural urban fringe and commuting zones needed a car to lead a normal life. In these zones, having a car was not equal to having a good car. One could often find old cars and self-assembled cars.

To relatively unpopular in Polish and Cracow households assets one can add recreational property – employees' allotments, properties with summer cottages or with the so-called "second homes". The research showed relatively high popularity of allotments with Cracow families (about 8% of all households). Most often the owners of such allotments came from the centre (except for city centre II) and Nowa Huta zones. In the communist system, owning an allotment was not equal to enjoying a good financial standing. It was rather a symbol of the strength, potential and position of a given company. Hence, the popularity of allotments among Nowa Huta inhabitants. Owning a recreational allotment was an expression of financial possibilities but also of preferences as to how to spend free time: 2.5% of the respondents confirmed they had such an allotment. Most often they came from the large housing estate zone and from the new suburbs. About 1% of the respondents declared they owned a recreational allotment with a house used all through the year, which could be understood as a second home. Such a prestigious property belonged most frequently to inhabitants of city centre I, and suburbs and Cracow's large housing estate zones. Relatively high popularity of the second home with the poorer inhabitants of the historic centre might show social polarisation processes which we are witnessing at the moment.

Another material perspective of the level of living is depicted in the research on poverty. This part of the study was based on the research conducted in Cracow in 2000 by Praweńska and Porębski [2003]. The analysis comprised both the spatial structure of the phenomenon across 18 self-governed districts, and the poverty level alterations between 1992–2000 (Fig. 4).

In the early 1990s, the poorest regions concentrated mainly around the central city (centre I, centre II and the city frame). Poverty was also a common problem in Nowa Huta, in its central part, in the housing estate part (Mistrzejowice, Bieńczyce), as well as in the old suburbs and the rural urban

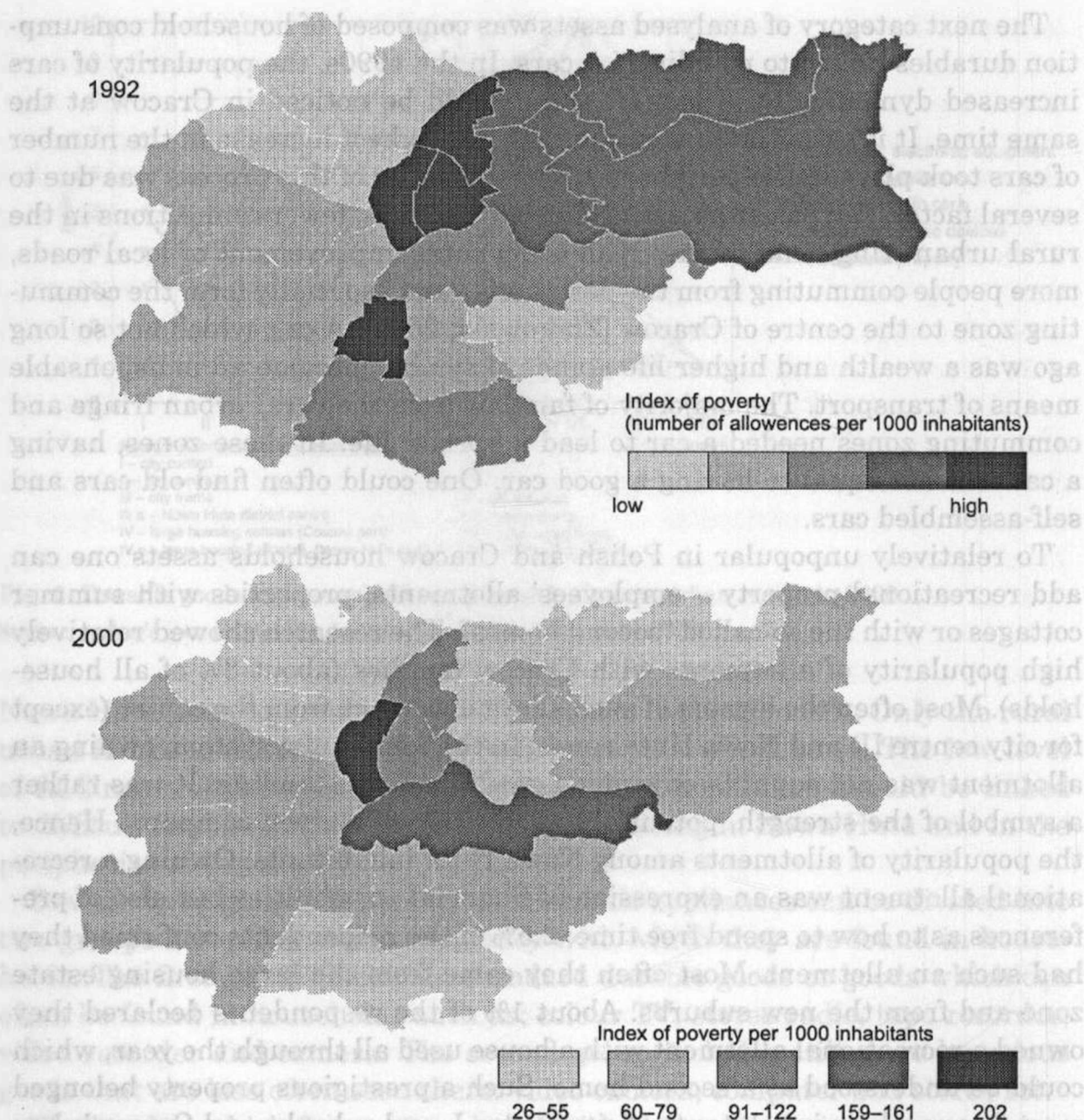


Fig. 4. Spatial structure of poverty in Cracow between 1992 and 2000

Source: Praweńska-Skrzypek, Porębski, 2003.

fringe zone. In the north-western part of Cracow poverty had the weakest influence. In 1992, the spatial differences of poverty ratio intensified to 1:5. The year 2002 brought about an increase in the spatial polarisation of poverty and poverty ratio intensified to 1:8. In 2002, poverty was still most common in the city centre, especially in low-standard old buildings. Poverty was more and more common in the old part of Podgórze, which was ruled by substandard tenement houses, and in enclaves of old housing estates of Zabłocie and Płaszów districts. The situation in Nowa Huta was, however, better, especially across the western part composed of housing estates of Mistrzejowice and Czyżyny.

Inhabitants of these two areas enjoyed a higher social status. The new suburbs and the rural urban fringe zone, along with the new suburban housing estates inhabited by higher status people, noted a decrease in poverty. What is more, the poverty level did not lower in the large housing estate zone.

When mentioning basic needs, one should not forget about the need of job. Although unemployment level in Cracow has always been quite low (it was lower than 7% in 2003), its structure was spatially diverse. This phenomenon is shown in Fig. 5.

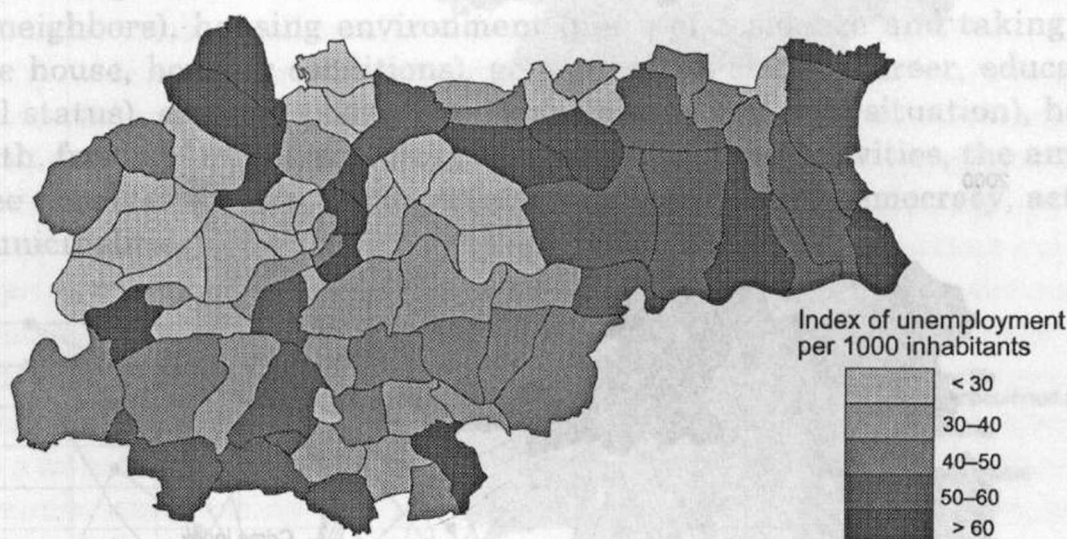


Fig. 5. The level of unemployment in Cracow by cadastral districts in 2003

Source: Pabian, 2004.

Generally, Cracow was divided into two parts as regards the level of unemployment: the western part with a lower unemployment rate and the eastern part (Nowa Huta) with a higher rate. The western part, although characterised by a low unemployment level, was, however, spatially diverse to a high extent. Two areas of the city were characterised by a particularly high unemployment level: 1) Tonie and Bronowice Wielkie districts in the peripheries (north-western part); 2) situated in the centre and comprising western peripheries of city centre II: districts of Wesola, Warszawskie and Kazimierz (old tenement houses). The highest unemployment level in Nowa Huta was noted in the centre of the district, as well as in the area of the oldest housing estates of Bieńczyce and Mistrzejowice.

Among the elementary dimensions of the level of living there is the safety need. Cracow's safety level was described with crime index [Kozimor, Mydel, 1983; Pawelska-Skrzypek, Porębski, 2003] analysed between 1983 and 2000 (Fig. 6).

One should pay attention to the stable relation between the number of committed crimes and their geographical location. In 1983 and in 2000 Stare

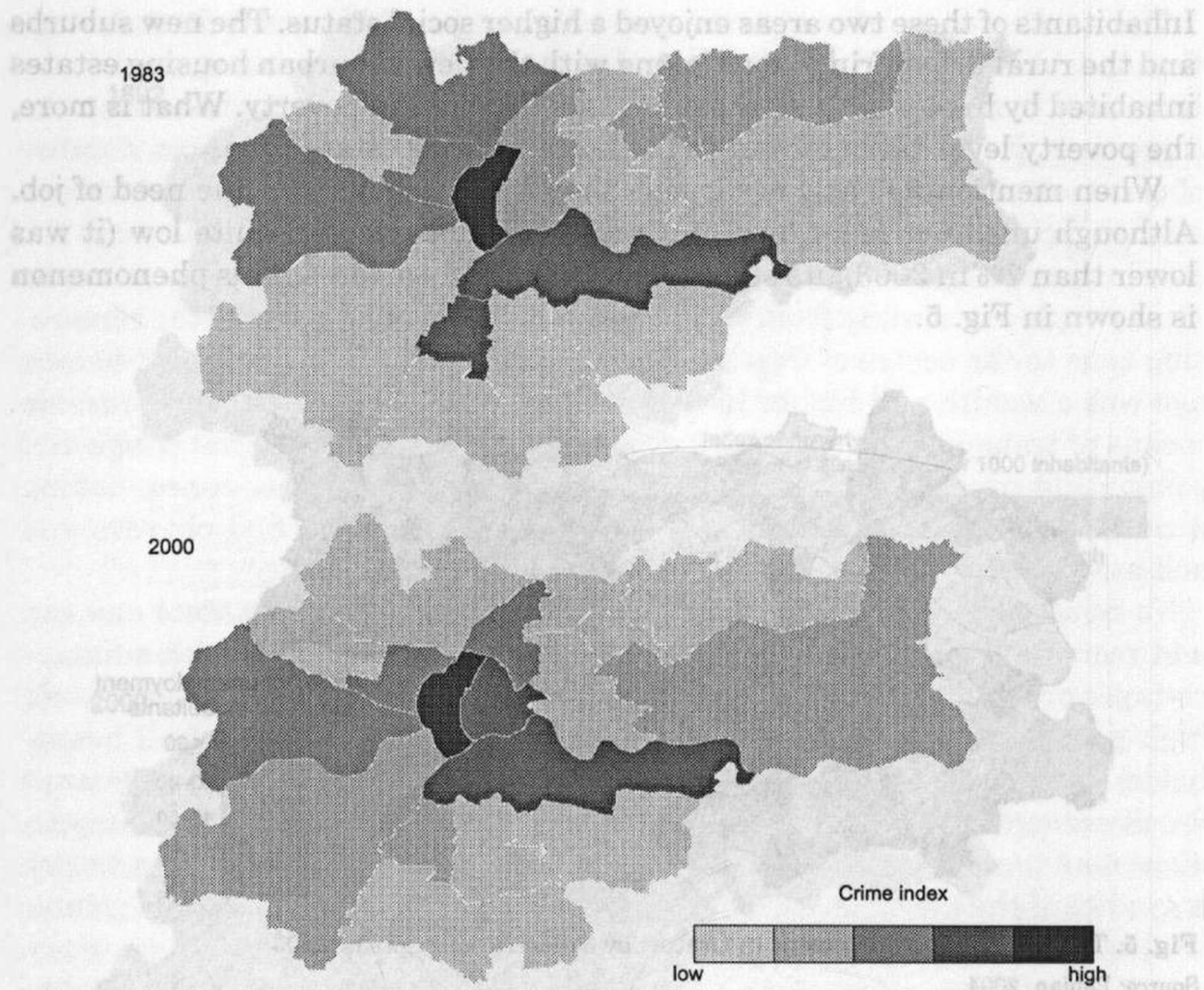


Fig. 6. Spatial structure of crime in Cracow between 1983 and 2000

Source: Mydel, Kozimor, 1989; Praweńska-Skrzypek, Porębski, 2003.

Miasto and Stare Podgórze along with Płaszów were the districts with the highest crime level. The peripheries (especially in the south) were the safest. This stable crime rate pattern was due to the location of a railway station, bus station and the market square. These locations were very popular with thousands of residents, as well as with visitors and criminals. The geographical structure of crime was also determined by social and spatial polarisation of the inhabitants.

3. The basic dimensions of the quality of life in the urban area of Cracow

One of the important aspects of analyzing the quality of life is a subjective assessment of respondents' satisfaction with vital areas of everyday life. This research assessed 18 areas, using a five-grade scale 1 (very dissatisfied) – 5

(very satisfied). The researched areas comprised: satisfaction with children, having friends, personal life, place of residence (district, village), neighbors, career, taking care of home, housing conditions, education, social status, health, frame of mind, free-time activities, material situation, financial situation, the amount of free time, stage of democracy in the country and activity of municipalities. In order to systematize the conducted analysis, the investigated fields were limited to categories describing the quality of life in Cracow urban region (Fig. 7). The following categories were selected: personal life and neighborhood (satisfaction with children, having friends, personal life, neighbors), housing environment (place of residence and taking care of the house, housing conditions), general social status (career, education, social status), economic situation (financial and material situation), health (health, frame of mind), spending free time (free time activities, the amount of free time), social participation (realizing the tasks of democracy, activity of municipalities).

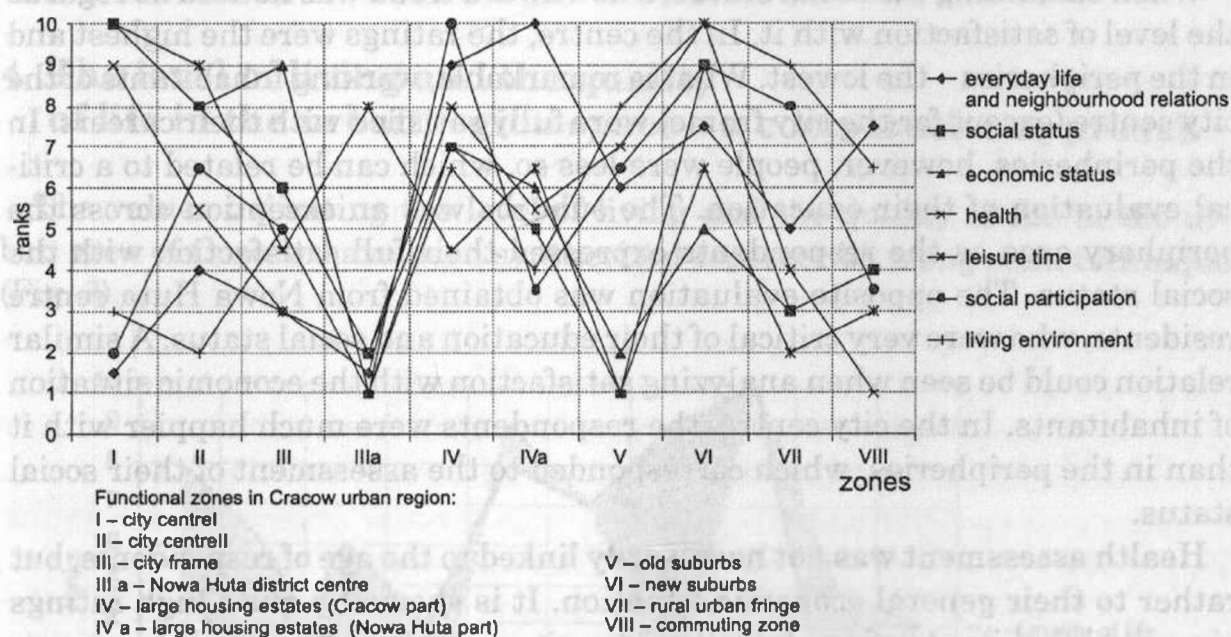


Fig. 7. Dimensions of quality of life in Cracow urban region in 2000

Source: author's own elaboration based on data from [Zborowski, 2005].

Family life and relations with neighbors were rated the highest in the large housing estate zones, such as the ones in Cracow and in Nowa Huta. It is worth noticing that Nowa Huta respondents coming from the centre and from the housing estate zones were very happy with their children. The residents of the other zone were also happy with their neighbors. This fact might rise some discussion as housing estate inhabitants are usually very anonymous. Very limited migration processes tightened neighborhood relations as well. However, Nowa Huta inhabitants (central part) were dissatisfied with their

neighbors, their personal life and neighborhood relations. Therefore their general personal life and neighborhood satisfaction level was very low. One can claim that varied backgrounds of Nowa Huta residents affected the creation of healthy neighborhood relations. Moreover, inhabitants were advanced in their ages on the average, which made the assessment more acute as well.

The Cracow urban region is significantly diversified as regards the level of satisfaction with housing environment. According to real housing conditions, the most objective assessment was given by residents of the suburbs and the peripheries. Inhabitants of Cracow part of housing estate zone rated their housing environment above the average. Nowa Huta centre inhabitants were negative about their housing situation, as well as about their place of residence. Such a negative assessment does not correspond to the average good housing conditions characteristic of the centre of Nowa Huta. It is to be supposed that the negative character of this rating is also caused by the fact that this district is perceived as a bad place to live in.

When examining the social status, a downward trend was noticed as regards the level of satisfaction with it. In the centre, the ratings were the highest and in the peripheries – the lowest. What is remarkable, working inhabitants of the city centre (except for the city frame) were fully satisfied with their careers. In the peripheries, however, people were less so, which can be related to a critical evaluation of their education. The suburbs was an exception across the periphery area as the respondents expressed their full satisfaction with the social status. The opposite evaluation was obtained from Nowa Huta centre residents, who were very critical of their education and social status. A similar relation could be seen when analyzing satisfaction with the economic situation of inhabitants. In the city centre, the respondents were much happier with it than in the peripheries, which corresponded to the assessment of their social status.

Health assessment was not necessarily linked to the age of respondents, but rather to their general economic situation. It is shown by quite high ratings given by inhabitants of a relatively older city centre, and by much lower ratings given by younger inhabitants of the peripheries. This category was also highly rated by people living in the new suburbs, which can be associated with their high economic standards and average young age.

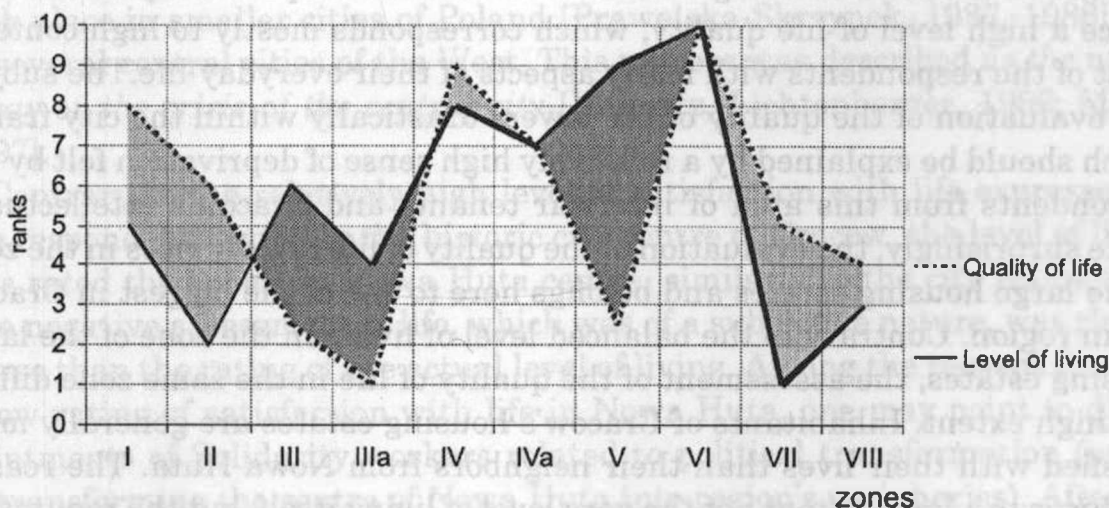
Another rated aspect – free time – divided the city into a group of more satisfied city centre inhabitants and much less satisfied respondents from the peripheries. "Having free time" received the lowest rating in all the regions. Assessment of free time activities was related to the social status and respondents' age as well. It was shown that older people enjoyed more free time and they were happier with their free time activities. On the other hand, inhabitants of the peripheries had relatively little free time. These inhabitants were often peasants who gave low ratings on this point.

Social participation was given the lowest rating among all the rated areas. Both the realization of democratic tasks and the assessment of municipalities were given low ratings.

All perspectives of the quality of life presented above have divided the urban region as regards evaluation of satisfaction related to all researched aspects. In several cases city centre inhabitants expressed more satisfaction than the people living in the peripheries. It was observed that the further it was from the city centre, the lower the level of satisfaction was. This kind of spatial pattern was observed in the case of the following categories: social status, free time and economic situation. On the other hand, housing conditions were rated higher in the peripheries than in the city centre. As regards health, family life and neighborhood and social participation, the highest level of satisfaction was expressed by residents of the suburbs and of large housing estates. These profiles indicate various assessments of the quality of life, depending on the analyzed category and functional zone.

4. The level of living and the quality of life in the urban region space – a comparative approach

The values indicating the level of living and the quality of life in the urban area of Cracow have been synthesized together by using rank technique (Fig. 8).



Functional zones in Cracow urban region:

I – city centre

II – city centre

III – city frame

III a – Nowa Huta district centre

IV – large housing estates (Cracow part)

IV a – large housing estates (Nowa Huta part)

V – old suburbs

VI – new suburbs

VII – rural urban fringe

VIII – commuting zone

Fig. 8. Quality of life and level of living in Cracow urban region in 2000

Source: author's own elaboration based on data from [Zborowski, 2005].

The level of living, measured by the objective attributes (housing conditions, household consumption durables and owning a real estate) shows a growing tendency together with moving from the city centre area to the suburbs. In the rural urban fringe, as well as in the commuting zone, an abrupt decrease has been noticed and a gradient of the decrease reached an extreme, from top level of living in the suburbs to minimum level in the rural urban fringe zone. This large difference in the rank values indicates that there is a threshold or a social barrier in the spatial development of Cracow urban region. It is an inheritance from real socialist period of strong demographic and infrastructural concentration which took place not only in the administrative area of the city but rather in the morphological agglomeration. A low level of living in the central zones, such as city centre I, II and Nowa Huta centre is noticeable. It is particularly low in city centre II, comparable to the level of living observed in the peripheral zones, and includes especially some selected parts of the central zones as Kazimierz and Stare Podgórze. A relatively high level of living appears in the zone of large housing estates and the differences between "Cracow part" and Nowa Huta are minimal. This is mostly a result of quite similar (and relatively high) housing standards in the area, as well as good quality of equipment in households with durable consumer goods.

Examining the quality of life (in a strict sense), measured by subjective attributes (estimating satisfaction with various walks of life), shows quite a different distribution of this category, as compared to the level of living. The quality of life curve in the centre – peripheries profile reveals substantial changes in the level of living and is sinusoid in its shape. In city centre I we notice a high level of life quality, which corresponds mostly to high contentment of the respondents with many aspects of their everyday life. The subjective evaluation of the quality of life lowers drastically within the city frame, which should be explained by a relatively high sense of deprivation felt by the respondents from this area of interwar tenants and Cracow's intellectuals. Quite surprisingly, the evaluation of the quality of life rapidly rises in the zone of the large housing estates and belongs here to one of the biggest in Cracow urban region. Contrary to the balanced level of living in the zone of the large housing estates, the assessment of the quality of life in the same zone differs to a high extent. Inhabitants of Cracow's housing estates are generally more satisfied with their lives than their neighbors from Nowa Huta. The reason for this is to a large extent not the very level of living itself, but the reputation of Nowa Huta spread by some Cracow-dwellers. Nowa Huta was regarded as a district of "other" people, strangers or visitors and, therefore, worse people. Nowa Huta inhabitants assimilated this opinion which was later reflected in the lower ratings of the quality of life. Another zone with subjectively lower quality of life is the old suburbs, where, just like in the city frame, inhabitants felt deprived. This conviction about the low quality of life can be explained

by the social shadow of a big city cast on the old suburbs, which kept its still specific suburban atmosphere [Frysztacki, 1997]. While confronting this subjective evaluation with the level of living (usually relatively high), which was rated extremely high in the new suburbs, the assessment might become a bit more negative. The suburbs are most frequently randomly located among old suburban buildings which promotes comparisons between the level of living of old and new residents. In the latter case, life standards are usually rated very positively, which corresponds to high ratings of suburban quality of life. Next, the quality of life lowers in the rural urban fringe and then in the commuting zone. When compared to the drop in the level of living, the decline in the quality of life is disproportionally small. It can be therefore stated that people living in the periphery rate the quality of life higher than objective measurements of the level of living. One can suspect that this positive dissonance corresponds to the attitudes of people, who are often poorer than city centre inhabitants. However, inhabitants of the peripheries enjoy their lives more. They still remember about discrepancies between villages and cities and are witnesses to the process of leveling off of the differences.

A similar primacy of the quality of life over the material level of life is common in Cracow city centre (city centre I and II). It should be suspected that this situation was due to the factor called "social location rent", which was present in assessments of Cracow's districts. "Social location rent" inspired the residents to approach their social status from the perspective of a district enjoying the status of "cultural parlor" for the whole urban area. The "cultural parlor" was seen as a stronghold never affected by social degradation which took place in smaller cities of Poland [Prawelska-Skrzypek, 1987, 1988] and in several central cities of the West. This process was described as *the urban decay or the crisis of the central city* [Heinritz, Lichtenberger, 1986; Majer, 1997].

Contrary to the relatively high level of satisfaction with life expressed by the respondents living in the historic city centre of Cracow, the level of living was rated the lowest in Nowa Huta centre, similarly to the city frame zone. The negative assessment of life, which was of a subjective nature, was clearly worse than the rating of the actual level of living. Among the reasons for such a low rating of satisfaction with life in Nowa Huta, one may point to disappointments of Solidarity workers related to political transformation (partly in transforming the centre of Nowa Huta into region's peripheries). After the War, the district had one of the best stocks of elementary goods, including luxurious stores such as fashion house "Moda Polska" or delicatessen shops, which – during the transformation – took over the place of small, conventional shops offering second-hand clothes and groceries. With no doubt, threats related to criminality that are present in the centre of Nowa Huta (including some of Nowa Huta housing estates) additionally outclassed this district in the

eyes of public opinion and thus diminished the sense of everyday satisfaction of its inhabitants.

5. Summary

This analysis of the level of living and the quality of life indicates considerable social and spatial polarization processes in Cracow urban region. It is important to add that in the transformation period there was an increase in diversification of the level of living and the quality of life between respective districts. This increase had a significant influence on the growing poverty disparity.

Generally, one can distinguish between two zones of low level of living *i.e.* the central part (especially city centre II) and the peripheries (rural urban fringe and commuting zone). A high level of living was characteristic of large housing estate zones, especially of new suburban housing estates. The spatial structure of the level of living referred to the diversity of quality of life only partially. There was no significant coincidence between two categories in the centre of Nowa Huta district and the old suburbs. It was common for both zones, however, that the level of living was rated higher than assessment of quality of life. The high level of living was contrasted by a declared feeling of deprivation common for residents of these zones, which indicated a low quality of life. In the city centre, as well as in its peripheries, the research showed a reverse to the above-described relation between the level of living and the quality of life. Inhabitants of these zones rated the quality of life higher than the level of living. The positive discord was surely the result of attitudes towards life characteristic of residents of the city centre and the peripheries, whose financial situation was much worse than that of their neighbors from the city frame or old suburbs zones. In the latter case, people show fewer attitudes toward claim and they can enjoy their lives more.

It is worth noticing that the level of living and the quality of life in the large housing estate zone were rated relatively high. This rating is contrary to press relations, which were often undocumented, announcing a total collapse of this zone.

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