

Paweł Starosta\*

MATERIAL SITUATION AND SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION  
OF RURAL FAMILIES

1. Introduction

Material situation represents an important component of the position held by a given individual or group in the social stratification system of a given society. Ownership type and differences in possession of definite material goods not only determine membership in definite groups or aggregations but they are also a main cause of social conflicts and tensions. That is why material situation and its differentiation within the framework of and between particular categories of the population constitutes a permanent object of interest of politicians and sociologists. Similarly in Poland there have been conducted systematic studies in this area for many years<sup>1</sup>. It should be stressed here, however, that most of these studies concern assessment of material situation and its correlates mainly among

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\* Institute of Sociology, University of Łódź, Poland.

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. B. Gałęski, *Gospodarstwo domowe*, "Wieś Współczesna" (Household, "Contemporary Village") 1975, No 4; M. Czerniewska, *Budżety domowe rodzin chłopskich* (Household Budgets of Peasant Families), Warsaw 1963; R. Turski, K. Lapińska-Tyszką, W. Nowak, *Przemiany klasy chłopskiej*, [w:] W. Wesółowski (red.), *Kształt struktury społecznej*, (Transformations of Peasant Class, [in:] W. Wesółowski (ed). *Shape of Social Structure*), Wrocław-Warsaw 1978; *Sytuacja mieszkaniowa ludności Polski w 1970 r.* (Housing Situation of Poland's Population in 1970), Warsaw 1978; W. Wesółowski (red.), *Zróżnicowanie społeczne* (Social Differentiation), Wrocław-Warsaw 1974; A. Wojciechowska, *Położenie materialne w kulturze a struktura społeczna* (Material Situation and Participation in Culture and Social Structure), Wrocław-Warsaw 1977.

urban population while the present situation of the rural population is less known. It becomes necessary to assess it since it was in the 70's that a number of important socio-political decisions aimed at fundamental reconstruction of the Polish village and agriculture were made. These decisions including such as: abolition of compulsory deliveries of food products to the state, encompassing individual farmers by retirement schemes and free medical care as well as reform of local power and administration system effected in 1973 paved the way for dynamic economic and social transformations of the village. Changes in the field of production technology and organization were accompanied by changes in the field of present and potential consumption and in widely understood material situation of families living in villages. It thus becomes a matter of utmost importance to assess the scope and directions of changes taking place as well as to evaluate differentiation of these processes both in the regional and socio-professional aspects.

## 2. Research problems

The above mentioned problems are treated, to some limited extent, by this article with the main attention being focussed on presentation of differentiation in material status of rural families in socio-professional, regional, and ecological aspects. The basic problem being discussed here boils down to the following questions: 1) which of regional, ecological, and socio-professional categories discussed here possess the best or the worst material status, and 2) whether differentiation of material situation of rural families is greater within socio-professional categories or within rural communes with different levels of socio-economic development, and finally within ecological zones inside a rural commune.

To provide a satisfactory answer to the above questions it is necessary to define, first of all, the material situation concept itself, which constitutes here a dependent variable, and determine its empirical indicators.

The sociological literature reveals different approaches to

the problem which is commonly referred to as "material situation", "material status" or "living standards".

The basic methodological problem was largely restricted to a question whether material situation was to be determined by means of consumption indexes, or by size of the possessed resources which were making possible this consumption? In statistical surveys on macrosocial scale "...a general measure of social prosperity is most often considered to be the consumption volume (i.e. consumer part of the national income) per one inhabitant"<sup>2</sup>. However, on the scale of individual families - as it is rightly pointed out by A. Wojciechowska: "Rational household economy consists in securing monetary and nonmonetary means for satisfying needs and purchasing necessary goods and services with these monetary means"<sup>3</sup>. Such comprehensive approach to material situation made the author distinguish between its following components: 1) widely understood incomes (i.e. money and nonmoney); 2) expenditure budget; 3) level of material equipment (property possessed); and 4) housing conditions<sup>4</sup>.

An essential characteristic of the above quoted proposition and of other propositions is analysis of material situation by means of objective indexes with simultaneous bypassing of subjective relativization of this state. Thus in other words, although objective measurement is extremely important in assessment of material situation, besides it is also important the fact what level of this objective situation is satisfactory and sufficient for some people and insufficient for others. That is due to the fact that this subjective self-assessment reflects, after all, aspirations and material desires of particular individuals and whole groups, which - in turn - play an essential role in formation of consumption patterns and more widely - of social attitudes.

Taking into account the above quoted remarks we shall be characterizing the dependent variable through: a) level of money incomes per capita in a given household; b) housing conditions;

<sup>2</sup> Wojciechowska, op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

and c) self-assessment of material situation. On the other hand, independent variables are represented by: a) socio-professional status; b) socio-economic type of the rural administrative commune; and c) ecological situation inside the rural commune.

Studies were performed in four smallest local administration units (rural administrative communes) in different regions of Poland in 1977. They differ from one another both in the volume of production, ecological situation and contents of settlement network.

Rural commune A (Pepowo) boasts by far the highest level of economic development and concentrated settlement network. It is located in western part of Poland far from bigger towns and industrial centres. In its socio-professional aspect it represents a farmer-worker unit.

Rural commune B (Opinogóra) is of predominantly agricultural character, with similar to A high level of agricultural production, and spatially scattered settlement network. Its specific characteristic is its location in direct vicinity of a town being a centre of an administrative province (voivodeship). It is situated in north-east of Poland.

Rural communes C (Sulmierzyce) and D (Widawa) are situated in central part of Poland and they represent a similar, low level of agricultural production with rural commune C located inside a zone of direct influence of big coal-mining centre where many of its inhabitants are employed. C is thus a worker-farmer rural commune with relatively compact settlement network while D is farmer-worker commune with scattered settlement network.

Each commune's area was divided into the following four ecological zones; 1) rural commune's centre encompassing a town or bigger village being a seat of local authorities, 2) adjoining zone, which encompassed locations in close vicinity from the centre, 3) intermediate zone - with locations in 20 to 30 minutes' travel distance from the centre, and border zone with travel distance exceeding 30 minutes. Percentage representation of the population analyzed according to its dwelling in ecological zones is presented in Tab. 1.

Table 1

Percentage share of respondents  
in rural communes according to particular ecological zones

Rural communes Ecological zones	A	B	C	D	Total
Centre	52.6	46.2	50.0	48.8	49.5
Adjoining zone	9.8	17.4	9.2	4.8	10.2
Intermediate zone	26.3	23.9	28.3	23.7	25.4
Border zone	11.3	12.5	12.5	22.7	14.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Studies in four rural communes encompassed the total of 757 households.

On the basis of such criteria as: ownership of production means and their size, level of professional qualifications and character of performed work there were isolated the following socio-professional categories<sup>5</sup>, the characteristics of which in percentage points are comprised in Tab. 2.

Table 2

Numerical characteristics of analyzed  
socio-professional categories in particular rural communes

Rural communes Socio-professional categories	A	B	C	D	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6
Farmers up to 5 ha	6.7	4.9	18.0	16.4	11.0
Farmers over 5 ha	17.5	63.0	12.4	22.2	28.5
Farmers in socialized farms	10.4	1.2	6.9	1.2	5.2
Unskilled workers	6.7	2.4	10.3	9.4	7.1
Skilled workers	32.7	11.5	26.2	24.0	24.1
Office workers	1.9	1.8	4.8	1.8	2.5

<sup>5</sup> On Theoretical and Methodological Problems of Socio-Professional Categories Division see Wesołowski (ed.), *Zróżnicowanie społeczne (Social Differentiation)*, p. 9-91.

Table 2

1	2	3	4	5	6
Rural intelligentsia	9.0	8.5	8.3	11.7	9.4
Others	10.4	4.9	11.7	9.8	9.2
Professionally not active	4.7	1.8	1.4	3.5	3.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The collected empirical materials are representative for particular rural communes while they do not provide a sufficient basis to make generalizations with regard to the whole population of Poland's rural inhabitants. And accordingly in this article a bigger emphasis has been placed on relationships between particular family types in their material situation rather than on their absolute characteristics.

### 3. Money incomes

Level of income per person in a given household was determined on the basis of verbal declarations of respondents concerning monthly incomes of all household members taking into account net basic incomes from work, additional incomes and different kinds of premiums and rewards as well as social benefits provided by the state and including: sick allowances, grants, old-age pensions, and scholarships. On the other hand, farmers were estimating the annual value of incomes obtained from their farms. Thus the total value of income per person is a sum of money obtained by all household members from any sources in 1977 and divided into the number of people remaining in a given household. It is, in this way, an amount potentially allocated on consumption of different kinds, and in case of individual farmers also on production investments.

Data contained in Tab. 3 allow to state that on the average the highest money incomes are in rural commune B - 1,661 zloty, while the lowest - in D, where they amount to 1,402 zloty. It should be mentioned here that the obtained average incomes in

all four communes exceed considerably Poland's social minimum fixed at the level of 1,250 zloty per person<sup>6</sup>.

Table 3

Money incomes per person in household  
in particular communes

Communes	A		B		C		D	
	l.b.	%	l.b.	%	l.b.	%	l.b.	%
0-500	8	4.0	3	1.7	19	12.8	24	12.5
501-1.000	39	19.4	27	15.4	28	18.8	39	20.3
1.001-1.500	49	24.4	36	20.6	38	25.5	46	24.0
1.501-2.000	41	20.4	31	17.7	23	15.4	30	15.6
2.001-2.500	17	8.4	20	11.4	13	8.7	11	7.3
2.501-3.000	16	8.0	10	5.7	13	8.7	13	6.8
3.001-3.500	31	15.4	48	27.5	15	10.1	26	13.5
No data	13	-	9	-	3	-	15	-
N	214	100.0	184	100.0	152	100.0	207	100.0
$\bar{x}$ *	1 631	-	1 661	-	1 459	-	1 402	-
$V^{**} = \frac{s}{\bar{x}}$	0.528	-	0.554	-	0.601	-	0.649	-

\*  $\bar{x}$  - mathematical mean; see H. M. B l a l o c k, *Statystyka dla socjologów* (Statistics for Sociologists), Warsaw 1975, pp. 63-66.

\*\*  $V$  - coefficient of variation =  $\frac{s}{\bar{x}}$ , where  $s$  - standard deviation; see: *ibid.*, p. 89.

The highest level of incomes per person as obtained in commune B is a result of relatively small - in comparison with other rural communes - category of the lowest-income households (1.7%), and simultaneously of the most numerous category of households with the highest incomes (27.5%). Similar relationships can be observed in A while in C and D the biggest share is represented by families with the lowest incomes - respectively 12.8 and 12.5 and the smallest share of households with the highest incomes.

<sup>6</sup> L. Z i e n k o w s k i, *Nasze dochody i co o nich myślimy* (Our Incomes and What We Think about Them), "Polityka" 1979, No 51.

The size of incomes in communes B and A is primarily determined by high production effects in agriculture, which are scored there. They are due to high level of capital intensity and generally speaking intensive economy within the framework of farms possessing big acreage. On the other hand, in rural commune B they are a consequence primarily of splendid soil conditions, equally favourable farm-size structure and big number of people employed in agriculture - or generally speaking, of less intensive economy.

In turn, higher incomes per person in commune C in comparison with D reflect, first of all, the fact that a considerable share of inhabitants of this commune (especially men) is employed in the nearby coal-basin on good financial terms.

The estimated income average figures in all the analyzed territorial units represent a resultant of quite essential differentiation within particular communes. This differentiation is highest in commune D ( $V = 0.649$ ) and lowest in A ( $V = 0.528$ ).

Within the framework of internal ecological systems there was observed a similar level of income differentiation as in the case of inter-commune differentiation since differences in obtained incomes of people living in different ecological zones are similar to differences between rural communes (Tab. 4).

Table 4

Incomes and their differentiation  
in particular ecological zones

Data	Centre	Adjoining zone	Intermediate zone	Border zone
$\bar{x}$	1.591	1.970	1.752	1.667
V	0.522	0.500	0.546	0.652

Level of this differentiation is, however, a little higher between communes ( $\bar{V} = 0.583$ ) than between ecological zones ( $\bar{V} = 0.555$ ).

In comparison with territorial units a generally lower income differentiation level was observed inside and between socio-professional categories (Tab. 5).



Table 5

Incomes and their differentiation  
in particular socio-professional categories

Catego- ries measure- ment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
$\bar{x}$	1 322	2 094	1 436	1 375	1 569	1 750	2 027	1 525	1 575
V	0.650	0.481	0.533	0.628	0.506	0.449	0.350	0.506	0.543

The highest average incomes fall to families of farmers possessing farms whose area exceeds 5 ha - 2,094 zloty, and families of persons with secondary and academic educational background (rural intelligentsia) - 2,027 zloty. On the other hand, the lowest incomes are obtained by families of farmers possessing farms under 5 ha - 1,322 zloty and of unqualified workers - 1,375 zloty. In the last two categories income differentiation is also highest. Values of variability coefficient V amount here respectively to 0.650 and 0.628. Nonetheless, in most socio-professional categories income differentiation is lower than in particular rural communes and ecological zones. In families of rural intelligentsia incomes remain at the most uniform high level ( $V = 0.352$ ).

This leads to a conclusion that generally the level of incomes in rural families is more differentiated inside particular regions than within socio-professional categories. An important exception to this rule is represented by white-collar workers with secondary or above-secondary education whose income levels are very similar in all rural communes and ecological zones. On the other hand, e.g. average per capita income in socialized farms in C = 2,100, while in B only 750 zloty. Also similarly among individual farmers with farms over 5 ha  $\bar{x}$  in A = 2,538 while in C - 1,639 zloty. Thus despite numerous achievements in the sphere of social policy in the village the problem of regional differentiation of villages from the economic point of view continues to exist and that especially with reference to individual farmers.

Irrespective of socio-economic characteristics prevailing in

individual communes, socio-professional categories and ecological zones inside the rural commune the level of obtained incomes is largely determined by such factors as number of persons per household, size of possessed farms, and working position - in relation to persons employed outside agriculture. In all 4 rural communes there were observed here relationships between increase of money incomes along with increase in the acreage of agricultural farms in case of farmers, and along with higher working positions in case of nonfarmers.

#### 4. Housing conditions

Along with incomes the housing conditions constitute the next dimension in material situation. In this article we shall be characterizing them by means of a set of objective indexes such as: a) number of persons per room, b) number of square meters of living area per person, and c) number of technical facilities including gas, running water, lavatory, bathroom with a tub or shower, and central heating.

Table 6 shows that unlike with incomes the most favourable housing conditions with respect to density can be found in rural commune D while the worst in B. However, in as much as in B most households possess a similar high density index in D the situation is much more differentiated, and the estimated average rate is a resultant between a considerable group of families with very low and a part with very high overdensity. On the other hand, differentiation in particular ecological zones is predominantly higher than in rural communes. The most favourable situation is enjoyed by inhabitants of the border zone and intermediate zone while the worst by inhabitants of the rural commune centre though generally speaking the level of housing density is not high in any commune (see Tab. 6).

Analysis of density in particular socio-professional categories (Tab. 7) produces a conclusion that the best situation here is enjoyed by white-collar workers with secondary and above secondary educational level and clerical workers with above secondary-school educational background. On the other hand, houses of workers (both skilled and unskilled) show the biggest overdensity.

Table 6

## Housing density in particular communes and ecological zones

Data	A	B	C	D	Centre	Adjoining zone	Intermediate zone	Border zone
$\bar{x}$	1.31	1.41	1.23	1.16	1.27	1.24	1.14	0.834
V	0.323	0.272	0.392	0.469	0.427	0.410	0.443	0.556

Table 7

## Housing density according to socio-professional categories

Data	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
$\bar{x}$	1.28	1.29	1.33	1.39	1.36	1.04	1.01	1.21	1.23
V	0.378	0.380	0.373	0.323	0.396	0.447	0.482	0.457	0.404

Generally speaking the analysis of housing conditions as regards their density leads to an opposite conclusion than in the case of incomes. This implies that differentiation of density within socio-professional categories is higher than within rural communes while the differentiation level is much higher in particular ecological zones of rural communes.

Density of housing resources is connected in an essential manner with size of living area per capita - as the next index of the housing situation. In this field, the most favourable situation seems to exist in commune C and the least favourable in B. In this rural commune as it was the case with density there was observed the most differentiated situation, while the most regular situation was discovered in C.

Table 8

Number of m<sup>2</sup> of living area per capita in rural communes and ecological zones of rural communes

Data	A	B	C	D	Commune centre	Adjoining zone	Intermediate zone	Border zone
$\bar{x}$	14.3	13.6	16.1	15.6	15.19	16.63	16.03	14.97
V	0.476	0.513	0.461	0.485	0.488	0.415	0.486	0.494

From the ecological viewpoint the biggest living area per one person prevails in families inhabiting the zone adjoining the commune centre while this situation is most differentiated in the border zone.

Taking into account the average number of square meters per person in particular socio-professional categories (Tab. 9) it should be stated that families of clerical workers with secondary-school and above secondary education as well as farmers with farm area of over 5 ha enjoy the most favourable housing situation with this situation being most unfavourable in case of agricultural workers and unqualified workers -  $\bar{x}$  amounts here to 10.6 and 12.6 m<sup>2</sup> per person.

T a b l e 9

Number of living area meters per person  
according to socio-professional categories

Data	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
$\bar{x}$	15.6	16.9	10.6	12.6	14.3	15.4	17.2	16.0	15.5
V	0.432	0.397	0.537	0.510	0.512	0.315	0.427	0.495	0.471

This situation differs very much among agricultural workers and among qualified and unqualified workers while it is most similar among clerical workers and among individual farmers with farms of over 5 ha. Still, generally speaking, when this aspect of housing situation is taken into account it should be said that the situation is more differentiated inside particular rural communes than in particular socio-professional categories.

Number of technical facilities in the house represents the next feature characterizing housing conditions of rural commune inhabitants.

Data contained in Tables 10 and 11 show that rural commune A has the most favourable situation in this field with the average of two facilities per one household, and with three facilities in over 40 p.c. of all houses. At the same time, only 12 p.c. of all houses in this commune are not equipped with any facilities while this share is about 4 or more times higher in the remaining communes. The most unfavourable situation in this respect prevails undoubtedly in commune C in which the share of

houses without any technical facilities exceeds 61 per cent, while  $\bar{x}$  number of facilities per house is also lowest here. This commune is also most differentiated in the discussed housing aspect while commune A is most homogeneous here.

Table 10

Number of technical facilities per house (in %)

Number of facilities	Rural communes			
	A	B	C	D
0	12.1	50.0	61.2	44.4
1	34.1	19.0	5.9	18.4
2	11.2	7.1	4.6	4.8
3	7.0	5.4	8.6	5.3
4	11.8	9.8	12.5	17.4
5	23.8	8.7	7.2	9.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
$\bar{x}$	2.43	1.32	1.27	1.62
V	0.743	1.28	1.39	1.13

Table 11

Technical facilities per house in percent figures

Facilities	Rural communes			
	A	B	C	D
Gas cylinders	78.0	26.1	11.2	18.8
Running water	49.1	27.2	31.6	43.5
Lavatory	36.0	23.9	27.6	30.9
Bathroom with tub or shower	44.4	23.9	32.9	32.4
Central heating	36.4	31.0	23.7	36.2

Taking into account the ecological lay-out (Tab. 12) houses of families living in the commune centre are best equipped while of those living in the zone adjoining the centre are worst equipped. Similarly differentiation of this situation is more pronounced in the adjoining zone in comparison with other ecological zones.

Table 12

Number of facilities per house according to ecological zones

Data	Commune centre	Adjoining zone	Intermediate zone	Border zone
$\bar{x}$	2.23	0.96	1.33	1.81
V	0.835	1.59	1.292	0.871

Better house equipment in the commune centre results among others from the fact that these are in most cases locations equipped with water installations, which - in turn - makes it possible to install bathrooms and lavatories. Inhabitants of smaller villages are for their most part deprived of this opportunity.

Within socio-professional categories (Tab. 13) families of white-collar workers with secondary-school or above-secondary educational background possess houses boasting the highest technical standard.

Table 13

Number of technical facilities per house according to socio-professional categories

Data	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
$\bar{x}$	0.92	1.18	1.86	1.34	2.08	2.82	3.56	2.19	2.0
V	1.440	1.280	0.778	1.127	0.907	0.754	0.483	0.831	0.793

Each statistical household in this category possesses at least three and 67 per cent of all households in this category possess at least 4 technical facilities. We should add here that rural intelligentsia in D has the best housing situation and the worst in B.

Unlike it was the case with white-collar workers farmer-families possess the worst standard in the analyzed aspect with the situation being worst in houses of farmers having farms with area under 5 ha. From among families belonging to this category as many as 41 per cent live in houses deprived of any technical facilities (as listed above) with a further 19 per cent in houses possessing only one such facility. Similar situation pre-

vails in houses of farmers whose farms exceed 5 ha in their area. Generally speaking indexes of housing situation differentiation (V) are mostly higher within particular communes and ecological zones than in socio-professional categories. In this aspect an exception to the rule is, however, represented by farmers possessing farms with area under 5 ha. Within this category differentiation is bigger than in all rural communes and three (with the exception of adjoining) ecological zones.

The above discussed three dimensions of housing situation were treated as its individual component elements and hence the sum total on the scale of a given commune's or given socio-professional category's housing conditions is a sum of positions obtained by particular category on detailed scales. In case the total number of points was equal preference was given to a unit holding a higher position on the technical house equipment scale. The housing situation thus defined is most favourable in rural commune D, and next in A and C, with the worst in B. Communes D and A possess similar housing conditions with houses in D having bigger area and smaller density though a little worse equipped with technical facilities than those in A. Rural commune B is largely different from others in negative sense since it is characterized with the biggest overdensity, smallest house area, and poor technical facilities being a little better than in C.

In ecological aspect housing conditions seem to be most favourable in intermediate zone and least favourable in that adjoining the rural commune centre. On the other hand, in socio-professional category aspect the best housing conditions are enjoyed by families of rural intelligentsia, clerical workers, and "others" - among whom the most numerous category is formed by private craftsmen.

White-collar workers with secondary-school or higher education - that is rural intelligentsia - have houses of the best standard in any of the discussed three respects. On the other hand, families of unskilled or agricultural workers have houses of the lowest standard. Analysis of coefficient value shows that generally speaking the housing situation is most differentiated in rural commune C and most uniform - of a high standard in A. With regard to socio-professional categories rural intel-

ligentsia possesses the most uniform and simultaneously best housing conditions with these conditions being most diversified in case of farmers, both those with farm area under and over 5 ha.

Roughly speaking the housing situation among farmers in all communes is more diversified than the same situation in all socio-professional categories inside each rural commune A, B and D.

#### 5. Self-assessment of present material situation

The third general factor determining material situation of analyzed families is self-assessment performed by the household's head - represented in our case by the man.

T a b l e 14

Self-assessment of present material situation in communes

Assessment	Rural commune			
	A	B	C	D
Very good	5.6	4.3	0.7	1.7
Good	80.6	67.1	67.4	59.9
Bad	7.3	6.8	17.4	19.8
Very bad	-	3.5	-	1.0
Inadequate responses	6.5	18.3	14.5	17.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Generally speaking the share of respondents assessing their material situation as good was highest (70 p.c.), 24 p.c. assessed it as very good, while 13 p.c. of respondents as bad.

On the rural commune scale the biggest proportion of satisfied inhabitants live in A with inhabitants of the rural commune D being least satisfied. Moreover, communes B and D are characterized with greater diversification of evaluations while communes A and C are more uniform in this respect.

Similarly, inhabitants of the zone adjoining the rural commune centre and of the centre itself assess most positively their present material situation with persons inhabiting the border



zone expressing most negative evaluations as regards their material position. Simultaneously inhabitants of the commune centre were revealing most differentiated evaluations, while those living in the zone adjoining the centre most uniform-positive evaluations.

In the sphere of socio-professional categories agricultural workers appear to be most satisfied with their present material situation and that despite the fact that as regards their housing situation they rank eight - thus holding the last but one position, and seventh position as regards their incomes. The second place with respect to self-satisfaction is held by individual farmers with farms over 5 ha as well as rural intelligentsia. People who are professionally not active and unqualified workers evaluate material conditions of their families relatively worst. Most differentiated evaluations were presented by those who were not active professionally and by individual farmers possessing farms with acreage over 5 ha. On the other hand, office workers were expressing most uniform and, at the same time, most positive evaluations.

While correlating objective situation characteristics and material situation self-assessment no essential statistical relationships were discovered. This may certainly provide one of premises for a conclusion that self-assessment does not reflect the objective state of ownership of definite commodities only but also the fact to what extent the ownership status approaches aspirations and preferences in this respect. This should also account for a high proportion of the satisfied in the group being characterized with a low level of goods ownership and also for the fact that among those best situated can be found persons negatively assessing their present material situation.

Generally speaking, high share of positive evaluations - regardless of socio-professional categories, commune type, or ecological zones can be easily understood if we take account of the fact that, on the whole, 70 per cent of those interviewed found that their material situation over the last five years had been improved while only 8 per cent of the total sample admitted deterioration of their material situation, especially in rural communes C and D.

### 6. Conclusion

While characterizing material situation of rural families in three dimensions we shall try to sum up now the above discussed detailed data.

Assuming that the above presented, particular dimensions (incomes, housing conditions, and self-assessment) constitute the whole of what we shall call - material situation - and that each of these factors is equally important we can rank-order rural communes, ecological zones, and social categories in particular dimensions according to those which have better material situation and those which have the worst material situation.

Analysis of situation in particular rural communes, which is presented in Tab. 15, reveals that the most favourable and the first place is held by commune A showing the highest share of those being satisfied with their material situation and including housing resources best equipped with technical facilities.

Table 15

Positions of rural communes in particular dimensions of material situation

Data	A	B	C	D
Incomes	2	1	3	4
Housing conditions	2.5	4	2.5	1
Self-evaluation	1	2	3	4
Sum total of rank values	5.5	7	8.5	9

Let us add here, moreover, that detailed housing indexes of commune A as presented here are more favourable than national average for the Polish village<sup>7</sup> and for Leszno province within boundaries of which commune A is located, with the exception of too big density, which in A 1.31 is higher than the national average (1.27) and provincial average (1.10). All in all, it should be underlined that common satisfaction with material situation in this administrative commune 86.2% is reflected in high level of objective situation.

<sup>7</sup> Data in brackets for 1977 were taken from "Statistical Yearbook" for 1978.

Rural commune B owes its second place to the highest level of incomes  $\bar{x}$  1661 and high share of those satisfied with their present material situation 81.4%. On the other hand, by comparison with the remaining rural communes it has the worst housing situation. Average density per room (1.41) is higher here than the national average for the village (1.27) and the province (1.31). Living space in  $m^2$  per person is, on the other hand, almost identical with the national average while the share of houses equipped with running water is by far higher than the national average for the village. Rural commune C represents average indexes while in D general material conditions are worst due to its last place on the scale of incomes and self-assessment. There can, however, be seen here a distinctly favourable housing situation. Average density per room (1.16) remains here considerably below the average figure for the Polish village (1.27) while the number of  $m^2$  of the living space per person 15.6 is also higher than the Polish average index. The situation looks similar in the field of technical facilities.

While analyzing similarities between positions of communes on three particular scales (incomes, housing conditions, and self-assessment) it should be underlined that they do not represent harmonized systems. Concordance coefficient  $r_w = 0.166^8$  points at big divergence in positions held by particular rural communes within the three discussed aspects of the material situation. Most uniform with respect to the material situation is commune A while in communes D and B the situation is most differentiated.

With regard to ecological intracommune zones (Tab. 16) inhabitants of the zone adjoining the commune centre enjoy the most favourable material conditions with predominantly worst conditions prevailing among inhabitants of the commune centre. This situation is not produced, anyway, by spatial distribution of units and groups within the commune alone. Nonetheless, there can be observed ecological intracommune differentiation encompass-

<sup>8</sup>  $r_w$  - concordance coefficient =  $\frac{12 W}{n^2 N(N^2 - 1)}$ ;  $0 < r_w \leq 1$ . See here A. G ó r a l s k i, *Metody opisu i wnioskowania statystycznego w psychologii* (Methods of Statistical Description and Inference in Psychology), Warsaw 1976, p. 44-45.

ing socio-professional differentiation. It can consequently lead to serious conflicts and tensions among inhabitants of rural locations. The worst and simultaneously the most differentiated situation in the commune centre results from the fact that it is mainly inhabited by representatives of socio-professional categories belonging to the lowest and the highest income brackets with the share of the former being much higher than of the latter. They are mainly inhabited by unqualified and qualified workers, farmers with farm area under 5 ha, rural intelligentsia and clerical workers.

Table 16

Positions of ecological zones according to particular dimensions of material situation

Data	Commune centre	Adjoining zone	Intermediate zone	Border zone
Incomes	4	1	2	3
Housing conditions	3.5	3.5	1.5	1.5
Self-evaluation	2	1	3	4
Sum total of ranks	9.5	5.5	6.5	8.5

Concordance of ecological zones positions in the distinguished three scales of the material situation is a little higher than in the case of rural communes and it amounts to  $r_w = 0.237$ .

A similar ordering procedure was also applied in relation to socio-professional categories from among which (Tab. 17) the best position is held by families of rural intelligentsia holding the first position as regards housing conditions, second - on incomes scale, and third in self-evaluation.

In the general classification the second place is held by families of individual farmers possessing farms with area exceeding 5 ha. They have relatively highest money incomes, occupy the second place on the self-satisfaction scale and only 5th on housing conditions scale. On the other hand, farmers possessing small agricultural farms with area under 5 ha and unskilled workers have the worst situation holding last but one or last place on particular scales. Farmers represent the most differentiated category with regard to the analyzed dimensions while

households of rural intelligentsia represent the most homogenous material situation of the highest level. The lowest level is represented by unskilled workers.

Table 17

Positions held by socio-professional categories  
in particular dimensions of material situation

Data	Incomes	Housing conditions	Self-evaluation	Sum total of rank values
Farmers under 5 ha	9	6	6	21
Farmers over 5 ha	1	5	2	8
Farmers in socialized farms	7	8	1	16
Unskilled workers	8	9	8	25
Skilled workers	5	7	5	17
Office workers	3	3	4	10
Rural intelligentsia	2	1	3	6
Others	6	2	7	15
People not active professionally	4	4	9	17

Within the framework of socio-professional categories there was also noted the highest level of concordance in rank ordering of positions within particular dimensions of material situation. The value of coefficient  $r_w = 0.555$ .

Thus the final conclusion is that the problem of regional differentiation of rural families in the analyzed communes continues to be present and that especially with reference to such socio-professional categories as farmers working on smaller and bigger farms. This also refers to farmers employed on socialized agricultural farms. On the other hand, it generally does not refer to rural intelligentsia displaying the most homogenous and simultaneously highest level of material conditions in the analyzed rural administrative communes.

Paweł Starosta

LA SITUACIÓN MATERIAL Y LA DIFERENCIACIÓN SOCIAL  
DE LAS FAMILIAS RURALES

La ponencia tiene por objeto presentar las relaciones entre la situación material de las familias rurales y sus rasgos de diferenciación social. Ante todo tratamos de contestar a la pregunta, si la diferenciación de la situación material es más grande entre diversas categorías sociales y profesionales o entre municipios que tienen diferente nivel del desarrollo social y económico? La variable dependiente es la situación material que se caracteriza por: a) la suma de dinero que correspondería a cada uno de los miembros de la familia; b) el nivel habitacional; c) la autoapreciación de la situación material. Las variables independientes son: la filiación social y profesional, lugar de residencia y el tipo socio-económico del municipio.

El estudio tiene un carácter empírico. Las investigaciones fueron realizadas en 1977 en cuatro municipios con diferente nivel de desarrollo económico en diversas regiones de Polonia. Se constató, que tanto los ingresos de dinero como el nivel habitacional, son muy diferenciados, predominando a la vez en las familias investigadas la apreciación positiva de su situación material. El nivel más alto de ingresos y condiciones de residencia tienen las familias de los intelectuales graduados en las escuelas superiores, los obreros calificados y los campesinos que tienen grandes explotaciones. Generalmente la situación material es más diferenciada dentro de los límites de algunas categorías sociales y profesionales, que en los municipios de diversos tipos económicos.

Павел Староста

МАТЕРИАЛЬНОЕ ПОЛОЖЕНИЕ И СОЦИАЛЬНАЯ ДИФФЕРЕНЦИАЦИЯ  
СЕЛЬСКИХ СЕМЕЙ

Автор доклада ставит себе целью представить соотношение между материальным положением сельских семей и чертами их социальной неоднородности. В частности, дело касается ответа на во-

прос: больше ли дифференциация материального положения сельских семей в рамках социально-профессиональных категорий или же в рамках гмин с разным уровнем общественно-экономического развития. Зависимой величиной является здесь материальное положение, отличающееся: а) размерами денежных доходов в пересчете на одну душу в данном хозяйстве, б) жилищными условиями, в) самооценкой материального положения. Независимой величиной являются: социально-профессиональная принадлежность, место жительства и общественно-экономический тип гмины.

Настоящий труд носит эмпирический характер. Исследования проводились в 1977 г. в 4 гминах с разным уровнем экономического развития и в разных районах Польши. Установлено высокую дифференциацию как денежных доходов, так и жилищных условий, но преобладающее большинство опрашиваемых семей положительно высказывалось насчет своего материального положения. Самый высокий уровень денежных доходов и жилищных условий отмечается в семьях работников умственного труда с высшим образованием, квалифицированных рабочих и в семьях земледельцев, обладающих крупными сельскими хозяйствами. Вообще говоря, материальное положение опрашиваемых семей больше дифференцировано в рамках некоторых социально-профессиональных категорий, чем в рамках экономических типов гмин.

*Paweł Starosta*

#### POŁOŻENIE MATERIALNE A ZRÓŻNICOWANIE SPOŁECZNE RODZIN WIEJSKICH

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest prezentacja relacji, jakie zachodzą pomiędzy położeniem materialnym rodzin wiejskich a ich cechami zróżnicowania społecznego. Przede wszystkim chodzi tu o odpowiedź na pytanie: czy zróżnicowanie położenia materialnego rodzin wiejskich jest większe w ramach kategorii społeczno-zawodowych, czy też w ramach gmin o różnych poziomach rozwoju społeczno-ekonomicznego. Zmienną zależną jest tutaj położenie materialne charakteryzowane poprzez: а) wysokość dochodów pieniężnych przypadających na osobę w danym gospodarstwie, b) standard mieszkaniowy, c) samoocenę sytuacji materialnej. Natomiast zmiennymi niezależnymi

są: przynależność społeczno-zawodowa, miejsce zamieszkania i społeczno-gospodarczy typ gminy.

Prezentowana praca posiada charakter empiryczny. Badania terenowe prowadzone były w 1977 r. w czterech gminach o zróżnicowanym poziomie rozwoju gospodarczego w różnych rejonach Polski. Stwierdzono wysokie zróżnicowanie zarówno dochodów pieniężnych, jak i standardu mieszkaniowego przy jednoczesnej dominującej w całej populacji pozytywnej samoocenie położenia materialnego badanych rodzin. Najwyższy poziom dochodów pieniężnych i najwyższy standard mieszkaniowy posiadają rodziny pracowników umysłowych z wykształceniem wyższym, robotnicy wykwalifikowani oraz rolnicy posiadający duże obszary gospodarstwa. Generalnie położenie materialne badanych rodzin bardziej jest zróżnicowane w ramach niektórych kategorii społeczno-zawodowych aniżeli w ramach gospodarczych typów gmin.