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STUDIES OVER CHARACTERISTICS SHAPING RESIDENTIAL ATTRACTIVENESS OF SUBURBAN RURAL AREAS

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Abstract. Nearly every third migrating person in Poland is found to have moved out of the city and into a rural area near big cities. Local authorities should analyze governed area in the terms of residential attractiveness and identify the most attractive localizations prone to residential development concentration. The aim of the article was to apply the weighted additive rule to identify the most attractive areas. It required creating the potential newcomer's profile and the list of demanded characteristics equipped with weights. It appeared that potential newcomers would be people in their 25–40 with small children, with the ability to achieve mortgage credit, higher education and strong links with neighboring city. The strongest impact on their decision would have low price of real estate, lack of burdensome objects, full access to media and neat surroundings. The scarcity of some characteristics can be compensated by the high quality of the others, and the level of compensation depends on the prescribed weights.

Key words: suburbanization, rural areas, residential attractiveness

INTRODUCTION

According to the United Nations, our planet has gone through a process of rapid urbanization over the past six decades. In 2014, over half of the world's population (54%) lived in urban areas. The urbanization trend continues to this day, and the urban population is expected to continue to grow. It is predicted that, by 2050, this percentage will have risen to 66% [UN DESA 2014]. The 2014 revision of World Urbanization Prospects by UN DESA's Population Division notes that the largest urban growth is expected to take place in India, China and Nigeria. In the case of Europe, North America and Oceania, the

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urbanization process will be rather stable, with the urbanization rate slowly increasing. At the same time, modern cities take the form of traditionally concentrated centers less and less frequently. The administrative borders of cities become too tight for urban people, who seek larger areas of space in order to increase their comfort of living. On the other hand, the convenience of living in the city has resulted in high prices being paid for urban real estates, which in turn has led to people looking for less expensive alternatives. Moreover, the crowds and noise encountered in urban residential districts have resulted in people moving to areas outside of, but at the same time, near the city, so that they can benefit from the city's advantages while living far enough away not experience its many inconveniences. Therefore, the process referred to as urban sprawl has become very common, especially in the United States and Europe. Urban functions spreading outwards from a city to its outskirts, have been regularly observed and described since the second half of the 20th century for the Western countries and the beginning of the 21th century in Central and Eastern Europe, including Poland[1]. Although it differs in different continents (i.e. in the US, sprawl is wider than in relatively compact Europe), it is an inevitable and controversial process, described as a major problem of today [Coisnon et al. 2014]. It affects every dimension of rural areas. According to Anas and Pines [2008], "low densities resulting from urban expansion to the nearest rural areas are blamed for the death of traditional neighborhoods, increasing obesity trends, reduced social interaction, and the depopulation of central cities". Cities are sprawling because the mobile urban population is earning higher incomes, has relatively easy access to plots of land localized in rural areas and, simultaneously, a greater need for living space, enabling escape from the traffic and stresses of daily life [Almeida et al. 2015]. The reasons behind urban sprawl have been revealed by scientists who studied the phenomenon in different contexts, e.g. Brueckner [2000], Glaeser et al. [2004], Nechyba and Walsh [2004], Lorens [2005], Anas and Rhee [2006], Burchfield et al. [2006], Jałowiecki and Szczepański [2006] or Śleszyński [2013]. All these authors agreed, that this process is common, therefore should be treated seriously and directed by the authorities.

Due to urban sprawl occurrence, suburban areas should be governed according to a policy taking into account the advantages and disadvantages of this process. Local authorities must implement spatial policies to ensure that the effects of urban sprawl are more beneficial (i.e. higher tax incomes) than their unfavorable effects (i.e. spatial disorder). Diversified policies are needed to plan for and manage the spatial distribution of the population and internal migration, as the development of the residential function is not spatially consistent. The residential function concentrates in areas with exceptional values understood as a set of demanded characteristics, which results in a population concentration in selected localizations. Residential value increases along with economic, social and environmental attributes. Such set of values encourages people to migrate from cities to neighboring rural areas. According to GUS (Central Statistical Office of Poland), 435,684 people in Poland checked out from the previous place of re-

[1] The symptoms of urban sprawl were noticed earlier in Poland [Czarnecki 1965, Zuziak 1982, Król et al. 1983, Jałowiecki 1987], however this process gathered momentum and scale only after transition, due to i.e. real estate market and mortgage development and after EU accession, due to i.e. increased transport mobility resulting from the import of the used cars.

sidence and the 43% of this number migrated toward rural areas [GUS]. The dominant majority (78%) [*Migracje*... 2014] moved in the new house localized within the borders of the same voivodship, thus migrations had a regional character. Observed migrations were both urban-rural and rural-urban. Authors of this article focused on the urban-rural direction, as nearly every third migrating person is found to have moved out of the city and into a rural area, mainly into rural communes surrounding big cities. Therefore, urban sprawl process should be monitored and directed mainly by local authorities, who need to analyze governed area in the terms of residential attractiveness and identify the most attractive localizations prone to concentration of residential development. The latter activity should be proceeded with the basic knowledge on the decision making process of potential "newcomer", because only then local authorities would be able to indicate the areas, that are the most attractive for the potential buyers. Currently, many models describing decision making process are supported by behavioral economics, i.e. models[2] based on the assumption, that buyers use the subsets of information, which are relatively easy to obtain [Tietz 1992, Todd and Gigerenzer 2000, Betsch and Glöckner 2010]. Acting accordingly to compensatory strategy, potential newcomers make use of all available cues to distinguish decision alternatives. With additive rules, they make choices by adding the cues associated with each available decision alternative and selecting the alternative with the highest score [Rieskamp and Hoffrage 1999]. Using the unweighted additive (ADD) rule, they simply add up the number of cues that support each alternative whereas in the weighted additive (WADD) rule they weight cues by their validity as defined by the conditional probability that the cue naturally occurs for a given decision alternative [Bryant 2014]. Therefore, knowledge on demanded characteristics of suburban area and their weights enables identification of the areas, that are the most attractive from the residential point of view.

Major aim of the article was to apply the WADD rule for selecting the most attractive areas. It required achieving two specific goals. The first specific aim was to create the profile of the potential newcomer – person, who would move out of the city and move in a rural municipality neighboring big city. The second specific aim was to prepare a list of demanded characteristics of potential new place of residence and to equip them with adequate weights. The results can be applied by the local authorities to identify the most attractive localization for the potential newcomers. However, it must be underlined, that the assessments should be repeated, as each one is valuated for the current state – the majority of newcomers take into consideration values available at the moment of decision (so-called hyperbolic discounting) [Laibson 1997, O'Donoghue and Rabin 1999, Brocas and Carrillo 2014].

MATERIAL AND METHODS

First aim was achieved through careful examination of data shared by GUS and CBOS (Public Opinion Research Centre) and observations described in the literature [Frenkel 2011, Zysk 2013, Rosner 2014]. On the basis of gathered information, the profile of the

[2] Such models are often used in the economics, i.e. to analyze financial markets [Banasiak 2010].

person, who would probable settle in the suburban rural municipality, was created. The potential newcomer can be described as a person, who simultaneously:

- currently lives and works in the neighboring big city and will keep the previous workplace, because:
  - 78% internal migrations in Poland were registered within the borders of the same voivodship (intraregional migrations) [*Migracje*… 2014];
  - population increase could be noticed mainly in the municipalities surrounding big cities [Frenkel 2011];
  - cities offered better employment opportunities, i.e. in 2014 registered unemployment rate in the city of Olsztyn was 6.9%, while for the whole Warmia and Mazury voivodship it was 18.9% (according to GUS);
  - the majority of suburban inhabitants works in the neighboring city [Drejerska et al. 2014];
  - the most often observed daily commuting distance (from home to work) was between 6 and 20 km [*Dojazdy do pracy*...2011];
- has a creditworthiness, what means:
  - stable professional situation;
  - at least average income;
  - more than 25, but less than 40 years (it results from banks requirements for the debtors of long-term mortgage credits);
- is married, because 74% of people, who moved in the rural areas were married [*Migracje*… 2014];
- has a 0–9 years old child/children, because children 0–9 years old, migrating with parents, made another numerous group [*Migracje*… 2014];
- has higher education, because well-educated people tended to change living place more often [Skwara 2007, Rosner 2014];
- prefers "urban style of living" but moves out into rural areas, because needs more space for enlarging family, demands higher comfort of living in own house built in the proximity of natural environment [Zysk 2013].

Achieving second aim required preparing the list of demanded characteristics of residentially attractive localization, conducting a survey among people coherent with created profile of potential newcomer, and finally calculating the impact indicators and converting them into weights. The list was elaborated on the basis of data published by GUS and CBOS, relevant literature [Bryant et al. 1982, McFadden 1997, Claval 2005, de Palma et al. 2005, Zondag and Pieters 2005, Charmes 2009, Kałuża, 2010, Pagliara et al. 2010, Bijker et al. 2012, Rosner 2014, Rothwell et al. 2015] and reports [*Diagnoza przyczyn*… 2010, *Mobilność*… 2011, *Migracje*… 2014]. The list includes following 18 characteristics of particular suburban area residential attractiveness (Table 1).

The list was used to prepare a survey that was conducted in 2015 among 164 people coherent with the created profile (married couples with: minimum one child, higher education and average earnings, who lived, worked and preferred leisure activities within the borders of the big city). Respondents were asked to assess with 0–3 scale the importance of each characteristic in decision making process while choosing particular suburban plot, where: 0 – zero importance, 1 – low importance, 2 – medium importance, and 3 – high

Table 1. Characteristics of residential attractiveness of suburban plots (alphabetical order)

Number	Characteristic
1	access to preschool
2	access to primary school
3	access to public transport
4	access to recreational infrastructure
5	access to trade and services
6	aesthetic buildings in the neighborhood
7	exceptional natural environment
8	forest in the neighborhood
9	good communication with the city
10	lack of burdensome objects in the neighborhood
11	lake in the neigborhood
12	low real estate price
13	media (water, sewage, gas, internet)
14	neighbors with similar income
15	security
16	significant number of municipal investment
17	spatial order
18	watering place in the neighborhood

Source: Own elaboration on the base of the literature.

importance. The answers were aggregated and impact indicators for each characteristic were calculated according to the following formula [Karaszewski and Sudoł 1997]:

$$W = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{k} n_1 w_1}{k \cdot N} \tag{1}$$

where: W – impact indicator;
k – maximum assessment from 1 to k;
i – assessment index;
n – number of answers for particular factor on the i place;
w – assessment proper for the place of factor i;
N – number of respondents.

Finally, achieved impact indicators were converted into weights, that were used in the calculations with the use of Fishbein model formula, adjusted by authors for the residential attractiveness [Holbrook and Hulbert 1975]:

$$A = \sum_{i=1}^{n} w_i v_i \tag{2}$$

where: A – total assessment of residential attractiveness;
w_i – weight adequate for the i-characteristic;
v_i – value adequate for the i-characteristic.

RESULTS

Survey conducted among selected respondents enabled calculation of impact indicators with the use of equation (1). The effects are presented in the Table 2.

Table 2. Characteristics, impact indicators and weights (rounded)

Symbol	Characteristic	Impact indicator	Weight
C1	low real estate price	0.87	0.07
C2	lack of burdensome objects in the neighborhood	0.87	0.07
C3	media (water, sewage system, gas, internet)	0.86	0.07
C4	aesthetic buildings in the neighborhood	0.82	0.07
C5	spatial order	0.80	0.07
C6	good communication with the city	0.77	0.06
C7	security	0.75	0.06
C8	forest in the neighborhood	0.72	0.06
C9	access to public transport	0.70	0.06
C10	access to trade and services	0.68	0.06
C11	lake in the neigborhood	0.68	0.06
C12	exceptional natural environment	0.62	0.05
C13	access to primary school	0.56	0.05
C14	access to preschool	0.51	0.04
C15	significant number of municipal investment	0.51	0.04
C16	watering place in the neighborhood	0.51	0.04
C17	access to recreational infrastructure	0.50	0.04
C18	neighbors with similar income	0.42	–

Source: Own calculations.

It appeared, that the most important characteristic of particular suburban area was the possibility to buy a real estate (building plot) for a low price. Equal importance was attached to the lack of burdensome objects in the neighborhood, such as gravel pit, sewage treatment plant, piggery or poultry farm, etc.; and the access to various media, such as water, sewage system, gas and Internet. Aesthetic buildings in the neighborhood and spatial order were also highly evaluated by the respondents and appeared to be slightly more important than good communication with the neighboring city. Potential newcomers would like to feel secure in their place of residence and to have the possibility to stroll in the nearest forest. Medium importance was attributed to the access to public transport, as the majority of respondents assumed continuous use of private cars; and to the access to trade and services, because of the possibility to make shopping in the neighboring city.

Respondents would appreciate the lake view and exceptional natural environment values as well as an access to primary school and preschool. However, they declared, that as well as sending children to the local educational institutions, they can drive them to preschools and primary schools in the neighboring city. Rather low importance was attributed to the significant number of municipal investment, and respondents would not regularly use the watering place or recreational infrastructure, except summer season. The lowest grade achieved the neighbors with the similar income, however, it can be assumed, that respondents were ashamed to answer this question with honesty, thus this characteristic was not taken into consideration while calculating the weights.

Impact indicators calculated for each characteristic achieved values from 0.42 to 0.87. They were converted into weights. Characteristics C1–C5 achieved weight 0.07; C6–C11 weight 0.06; C12–C13 weight 0.05; C14–C17 weight 0.04. To simulate decision making process according to WADD rule, local authorities should assess the value of each characteristic for the particular areas and add their weighted values according to the adjusted Fishbein model – equation (2):

$$A = 0.07v_{c1} + 0.07v_{c2} + 0.07v_{c3} + 0.07v_{c4} + 0.07v_{c5} + 0.06v_{c6} + 0.06v_{c7} + 0.06v_{c8} + 0.06v_{c9} + + 0.06v_{c10} + 0.06v_{c11} + 0.05v_{c12} + 0.05v_{c13} + 0.04v_{c14} + 0.04v_{c15} + 0.04v_{c16} + 0.04v_{c17}$$

At this level, the most important task for local authorities would be the application of adequate method to assess the values. One of the suggestion is to use the 0–3 scale for the following assessment of i.e. media (C3), where: 0 – if there is no media available, 1 – if only water is available, 2 – if water and sewage system are available, 3 – if water, sewage system, gas and Internet are available.

CONCLUSIONS

Urban sprawl, process currently common worldwide, is also observed in Poland, where nearly every third migrating person is found to have moved out of the city and into a rural area, mainly into rural municipalities surrounding big cities. It causes many effects, both beneficial and disadvantageous. Therefore, urban sprawl process should be monitored and directed by local authorities, who need to analyze their municipality area in the terms of residential attractiveness and identify the most attractive localizations. Such identification can be made according to the WADD rule. It requires information on the demanded characteristics of the particular objects, as well as the weight and value of each characteristic. According to authors' studies, the majority of new settlements established in the rural areas neighboring big city are people in the age of 25–40 with children 0–9 years old, with sufficient income to achieve a mortgage credit, higher education and strong links with the city (work, recreation, shopping, etc.). They seek for real estate with a relatively low price, localized in the environment free from burdensome objects, equipped with media and surrounded by neat houses built with the rule of spatial order. Newcomers would also appreciate comfortable daily communication with the city, security, strolling in the nearby forest or toward the lake and using occasionally public transport or local stores. Moreover, they would be quite satisfied with exceptional natural landscape and the opportunity to choose among urban and

rural educational institutions. Occasionally, they would use recreational facilities or watering place, and would like to observe public investments taking place. Conducted survey enabled calculation of weights. Therefore, the next task for local authorities is choosing and applying adequate method to assess the values. It must be underlined, that the assessments should be repeated, as it is valuated for the current state and the total score will change if any characteristic changes.

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BADANIE CECH KSZTAŁTUJĄCYCH ATRAKCYJNOŚĆ MIESZKANIOWĄ PODMIEJSKICH OBSZARÓW WIEJSKICH

Streszczenie. Co trzecia migrująca osoba w Polsce przeprowadza się z miasta na obszar wiejski w sąsiedztwie dużego miasta. Władze podmiejskich gmin powinny badać atrakcyjność mieszkaniową oraz identyfikować obszary najbardziej podatne na koncentrację inwestycji zabudowy rezydencjonalnej. Głównym celem artykułu było zastosowanie reguły addytywnej ważonej w celu wskazania tego rodzaju miejsc. Wymagało to stworzenia profilu potencjalnego osadnika oraz przygotowania listy pożądanych cech lokalizacja wraz z ich wagami. Badania wykazały, iż na wsi zamieszkałyby osoby w wieku 25–40 lat z małymi dziećmi, zdolnością kredytową, wyższym wykształceniem oraz silnymi powiązaniami z miastem. Na wybór miejsca zamieszkania największy wpływ miałaby niska cena nieruchomości, brak obiektów uciążliwych, pełny dostęp do mediów oraz zadbane otoczenie. Jednakże niedostatek poszczególnych charakterystyk lokalizacji może być rekompensowany wysoką jakością innych, a stopień kompensacji zależy od wag przypisanych poszczególnym charakterystykom.

Słowa kluczowe: suburbanizacja, obszary wiejskie, atrakcyjność mieszkaniowa

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