

The idea of "Zero Waste" in short is about minimizing waste generation. One of the first steps in its implementation is to change consumption habits by increasing the responsibility of societies for the waste they produce. That is why it is so important in this context to conduct appropriate segregation, which allows for more effective recycling and minimizes the amount of waste in landfills. However, both the amount of waste generated and the effectiveness of their selective collection vary depending on the location.

The differentiation of the approach to waste segregation may result from various factors - social, demographic, psychological, behavioral, institutional and many others. These factors have a direct impact on the situation on the waste market and the logistics of its collection and management. Differences in the amount of waste collected selectively are noticeable in space, but this state also changes over time.

The subject of the study of this project will be the identification and an attempt to determine the significance of individual factors in the context of the differentiation of the level of ecological awareness of residents in spatial terms in rural areas in Poland. The time scope is intended to capture short- and medium-term trends (the target period for the study will be 2019-2023). Many available data and analyses show that rural areas differ significantly from cities in terms of selective waste collection. It seems that rural residents are more willing to segregate waste than city residents. Moreover, rural areas are characterized by large differences in the achieved recycling standards. There are areas where the problem of segregation is quite serious, and those that can be considered a model in implementing the "Zero Waste" idea. In view of the above, the question arises as to what factors determine the alleged success of rural areas in the context of segregation and is the ecological awareness of rural residents really so high everywhere? Finally - do these phenomena show any trends in geographical space?

The first stage of the project will be to compare information on the amount of waste generated and the level of segregation and demographic data (e.g. age structure, number of residents by type of development). Other factors will also be examined, e.g. population density and distance from large cities. Consequently, the next stage of the study will be to identify and attempt to prioritize factors influencing the amount and structure of municipal waste. This stage will be an attempt to systematize these factors and assess their significance. The study will consist of identifying factors studied in the literature on the subject and conducting social research consisting of conducting a survey among experts in the field of waste management at the local level of public administration.

The last task will be to assess the ecological awareness of rural residents and determine the factors significantly influencing their specific attitudes in the field of waste management. For this purpose, a survey will be conducted among rural residents in purposefully selected communes representing different levels of segregation and different demographic conditions.

Each stage of the study will aim to capture spatial trends in the scope of: diversification of the amount and structure of municipal waste (stage 1), diversification of the hierarchy of factors (stage 2) and diversification of the level of ecological awareness and the impact of motivational factors (stage 3). Finally, the results will be synthesized and recommendations will be developed for the implementation of information policy in different types of areas.

The most important effects of the project will be: an assessment of trends in waste generation and segregation in rural areas in Poland in the context of socio-demographic conditions, a hierarchical comparison of determinants influencing the amount of waste and the level of segregation (in order from those that have the greatest impact to those that are less important), and an assessment of the ecological awareness of residents in the context of the previously examined trends and factors.