

Wacław Piotrowski \*

INSTITUTIONAL AND SPATIAL STRUCTURALIZATION  
OF POLISH VILLAGE

Basic problem in applying the ecological approach to analysis of socio-spatial structure of the rural commune is solution of a dilemma whether administrative division units set up on the strength of arbitrary decisions made by "upper levels" may be considered "a natural area". The recent history of the spatial genesis of rural communes can shed some light on this problem. Decisions delimitating areas for particular units of the administrative division were not made in a mechanical manner. And although these decisions were not based on systematic socio-ecological studies, they were based on knowledge coming from previous experience, confronted and agreed upon at local power levels by practitioners, experts on the subject. Striving to maintain a relative homogeneity as regards the accepted population and area criteria, all efforts were made to link together into rural communes groups of settlement units which through history, traditions, present experience, road network etc. were combining in a natural way to form signalling functional and spatial relationships of an entity.

The fact that the first projects concerning administrative division were oftentime a subject of violent criticism producing ardent opposition on the part of involved aggregations or village subaggregations, especially along border lines of projected

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

rural communes, would also confirm the then trends aiming at implementation of not so much bureaucratic solutions but delimitation of areas linking, to some extent, integrated socio-spatial entities. Obviously not all the final decisions can be treated as fully satisfactory, and similarly not all rural communes were given an equal chance for achieving optimal physical, social and ecological integration. Nonetheless the fact that administrative decisions were aiming at providing such a chance must be underlined here. Results of administrative procedures are still far from a full success, which can be achieved over a long-term process encompassing both the effects of rational policy pursued by interested authorities, being objectivized in implementation of planned goals, and effects of unrestrained behaviours positively correlated with planned expectations.

Analyzing the rural commune as a potentially "natural" area, stress should be laid, first of all, on factors and conditions promoting the process of assuming "natural dimensions" or hampering it. All that assuming that becoming a natural area of a basic administrative division unit - the rural commune - understood as administrative, socio-economic microregion is a desirable state.

Formation of rural communes in 1973, along with other changes, opened two new important possibilities. First, the system of local links of institutions and organizations, being of great importance in formation of a new rural life system, was included into the area of each rural commune thus determining the new, concrete, and uniform spatial coverage of the supra-village locality. Secondly, formation of new type horizontal relationships between links of the commune system of institutions and organizations paved the way for formation of rural commune systems connecting all formal social structures under co-ordinating supervision of the commune power and management centre. These structures, generally speaking, are oriented at implementation of local socio-economic tasks, satisfaction of local needs of the whole rural commune aggregation, particular social categories present within the commune, settlement units of the commune system, and finally also particular units. It should be fully emphasized here that rural communes represent the first territorial aggregation in the history of the Polish village

equipped with real local power. Presence of the local power bodies, possessing decisional and co-ordinating rights in relation to all locally operating institutions and organizations creates a possibility of transforming a set of these structures into a simple system. It is linked by a common operational territory as well as by a definite place and role in tasks outlined in a commonly binding socio-economic development plan of rural communes.

This system as a whole plays the role of a subsystem in a territorially and administratively higher power level - the provincial system.

The rural commune's institutions and organizations system, if consolidated by target-oriented policy pursued at higher and local levels, may constitute one of fundamental conditions determining social, supra-village rural commune integration along principles of participation in higher level structures preserving awareness of obligations in relation to these structures as well as awareness of its own local interests and needs. And even if the set of rural commune institutions and organizations does not fully meet the requirements of a system from the functional ties viewpoint, it still objectively provides prerequisites for social integration. These prerequisites can be found, first of all, in obligatory common behaviours of the population connected with satisfaction of diverse needs within the commune's area and through institutions and organizations operating within the rural commune.

Obligatory behaviour of the commune's inhabitants, oriented at the local set of links of institutions and organizations, must by itself produce a network of social ties, the formal and real character of which, especially in rural areas, if it is not simply determined by direct subject relationships then it must provide a basis for formation of such relationships. Spatial mobility of population within the commune's area, connected with local satisfaction of needs and much bigger than in the previous period, affords additional chances for formation of spontaneous social ties. All these factors allow to formulate a thesis confirming the chance for transformation of the commune's aggregation established through administrative decisions into a multivillage rural commune community. Such community represents

a new and different quality in comparison with traditional village communities. The latter, however, do not vanish within rural communes and continue to represent an important group of reference and identification while through the frames of local life they lose a lot in their traditional exclusivity as "a small homeland" in favour of expanded common rural commune locality.

The above mentioned phenomena and processes occurring in the Polish village make it certainly possible to define the rural commune as a newly formed unique "natural area". Reservation should, however, be made here that intensity and consequences of the discussed phenomena can be perceived not always and not everywhere, and neither in all shapes of the rural commune.

Our further discussion will focuss primarily on areas of small-scale agriculture predominating in Poland. This limitation does not encompass the whole problem anyway since also in this sphere there exists big diversification of spatial structure forms. Still there can, for the most part, be observed rural communes - which is anyway in line with fundamental assumptions - encompassing several dozen villages subordinated to one locality - a relatively bigger village or small town. In the former case it is, as a rule, a village which in the previous administrative system was performing the role of a district centre. As regards the alternative, it is well known that previously localities possessing a formal status of a town, even a small one, were constituting administratively independent units which theoretically were not participating in the administrative life of the district. In practice, however, they were performing functions of a natural centre for adjoining agricultural areas concentrating in their framework a number of institutions and organizations providing services for the village and agriculture. The bill, on the strength of which rural communes were established, regulated this undoubtful oddity in the administrative-spatial structure, including small towns as an integral part of rural communes.

Location of the commune centre's seat in one of villages belonging to the new rural commune or a small town created a basis for socio-spatial structuralization of rural areas. Establishment of the commune centre housing local power and admini-

stration organs and offices, on one hand, and concentration of other central links of the commune's system of institutions and organizations, on the other hand, led to objective situation of central-centric activities and behaviours of the population inhabiting the whole rural commune's area. This, in turn, produced definite consequences in the field of activities being objectivized in different settlement units of the rural commune system. An important role in this respect is played by ecological distance connected with the rural commune communication and road network. Against this background is shaped a visible differentiation of the ecological position held by particular villages and constituting a definite form of the commune's spatial structure.

It should be mentioned here that the very essence of rural commune, multivillage life system, which is taking a definite form today, includes a number of attitudes or behaviours being obligatory for the rural commune's population, which is obliged to satisfy many of its needs and arrange many matters in the institutions and organizations concentrated in the commune centre. Obligatory character of contacts with the commune centre does not imply that in concrete, spatially determined village situations being differentiated by ecological distances from the commune seat, there do not appear differences in quality and intensity of these contacts.

A simple model of the commune's socio-spatial structure, if its seat is located in decisively dominating settlement unit, implies a system of concentric zones. For model purposes there can be basically distinguished three zones outside the centre itself: adjoining, intermediate, and border zone. The adjoining zone encompasses locations situated in close vicinity to the commune centre. In this zone, due to a short spatial distance, ecological distances from the centre itself do not play an important role. This zone is characterized with relatively considerable weakening of self-sufficiency of particular villages, which among others can be observed in the sphere of declared service needs since, after all, these services are easily available in the commune seat. Moreover, the role previously performed by village-local social activists becomes less important since these activists more often become members of central

groups of activists. Accordingly the village links of the commune's system of institutions and organizations play a smaller role.

The intermediate zone is also linked with the centre and its facilities although a little more loosely. Still in this area there can be already seen internal differentiation between villages situated directly along main communication routes leading to the commune centre and villages situated away from the main road network. Gravitation of this zone towards the centre is also differentiated by seasons of the year since transport conditions may be deteriorated temporarily by autumn rainfalls, snows, or spring thaws. This zone along with the adjoining one may be said to constitute a part of the commune's natural area. Distinct identification with the centre and area gravitating towards it takes place here. Nonetheless, integration and identification do not pose an obstacle to cultivation of local characteristics, especially from the point of needs, the satisfaction of which on the spot and not in the commune centre reflects the degree of success in arranging everyday affairs. Villages in this zone, paying a due regard to the role played by the centre, would like to have easy access to such facilities as the school - at least its branch, stores, agricultural produce purchase, and procurement points etc.

The border zone, if it exists since that is not a rule, gives rise to a number of different problems and causalities. These are determined among others by such factors as: extended ecological distance from the centre accounting for unwillingness or recalcitrance in situations of obligatory contacts due to objective difficulties in reaching the centre also combined with a risk whether a need will be effectively satisfied or some matter arranged. Natural gravitation to other, ecologically, closer centres outside the commune's area in which satisfaction of definite needs is possible though sometimes more difficult than in the case of local residents takes place even when formal prohibitions are absent. For example, when purchasing machines or means for crop cultivation or breeding which are in short supply. Certain habits originating from the time when other socio-spatial systems existed and strengthened by tradition can largely account for such spontaneous behaviours. Villages within

this zone are mostly characterized with bigger local activity at the expense of restricting contacts with their own commune centre.

This zone, although similar definitions are not usually used, is often treated in the commune centre as the commune's outskirts being somewhat troublesome since not so easily accessible, generally not fully equipped with different services and simultaneously putting forward various claims on the forum of the commune's authorities as areas locally integrated and little recognizing their subordination to the centre.

In reality, the simple concentric model undergoes some modifications influenced by another model of socio-economic structure of the rural commune which can be distinguished, and namely the sector model. It can appear in a situation when the rural commune was formed by grouping several previously separate administrative districts, the former centres of which were holding a similar rank and importance as the centre newly-selected for the commune's capital. These dominating - along with the commune centre - settlement units even though they do not possess their former rank due to absence of the commune's organs and institutions there, due to their equipment with service facilities constitute, on one hand, centres of domination and gravitation for several or more villages while, on the other hand, they are functioning as seats of supra-village facilities being complementary in relation to the centre. It may be added here that their social-prestige position, being reduced in relation to the commune centre, becomes oftentime a basis of local conflicts, especially competing to achieve new benefits or facilities connected with new investment projects. Existence of the sector structure which anyway quite often appears in practice, coexists with the concentric system. In such a situation, however, a relatively smaller role is played by the border zone which directly enters into gravitation system towards centres of local, "supra-commune" domination. That is the case unless particular villages located in border areas gravitate towards centres of domination lying outside the area of a given rural commune.

Apart from that the sector structure is of importance in those situations, occurring rather seldom, when the rural commune, for example, surrounds with a ring an administratively iso-

lated town of significant size or rank - a former district or present provincial centre. Of course, from the point of view of the assumptions made earlier such a situation excludes a chance for the commune's whole area to assume "natural characteristics" in favour of eventual assumption of "natural characteristics" by areas belonging to particular sectors.

In practice, when we take into account typical cases and reject the above formulated (real) example as some kind of pathology, we shall find that coexistence in the process of crystallization of multivillage rural commune community and simultaneously inclusion of this community parallelly in a quasi natural area of both trends i.e. structural-concentric-zone and sector system leads to a conclusion that gradual integration of the rural commune is possible. In the first stage an integrated supra-locality may, to a bigger extent, exist at the level of sectors in order to bring about the commune's unity through their functional integration on the basis of a common system.

Attributing to one of settlement units within the commune system functions of the centre, in which were located main institutions of local power, administration and management as well as main institutions providing services for the population in the field of welfare, living, cultural, educational and other needs paved the way for deepening differences in social and material environment between the commune centre and remaining villages. These differences, for obvious reasons, concern primarily the social structure of inhabitants. The commune centre is by far more heterogeneous professionally and in the sphere of education. It is here that a much bigger proportion of professionally active people is employed outside agricultural farms, and here mainly in state and co-operative institutions. Persons with secondary-school or academic educational background live mostly in the centre. Zones surrounding the centre are more homogeneous in every respect. Only locations performing functions of centres for sub-commune sectors, mainly as remnants of former, more spatially scattered administrative division of the former administrative district are less homogeneous in their social structure than other villages. Concentration of state service and institutional investments in commune centres as well as concentration of socialized forms of housing construction (often multifamily

blocks of flats) will continue to deepen differences between the centre and remaining zones. Undoubtedly the processes of social and material urbanization of the village connected with general socio-economic development of the country can be observed, to a bigger extent, in commune centres even if we take into account only their relatively higher standard of the material environment.

Apart from the above presented model approaches to essential elements of socio-spatial structure of communes, one can obviously distinguish in their area different types of subareas when applying different criteria. Besides the obvious physio-graphical differentiation, which is of great importance in production forms of utilizing areas there can also be perceived other principles of division. Division determined by coverage of church parishes also is of some importance in the integration process of the rural commune as a multivillage community. This kind of division, as it is known, collides with the basic administrative division creating special conditions for formation of spontaneous socio-spatial behaviours regardless of a pronounced process of life secularization. Similarly specialization phenomena in production sphere produce numerous new problems finding their reflection in the socio-spatial structure of the rural commune. Optimization of these useful phenomena in economic life of the village calls also for spatial concentration of investment outlays oriented not only at individual farms but also at whole villages which should be accompanied by construction of a proper road network, and thus change of ecological position held by a given village in the whole structure.

The above presented problems do not exhaust the whole range of complicated problems concerning the commune's socio-spatial structure. The intention of this analysis was to prove that in present time matters of multivillage ecological structures have assumed great validity. Ecological approach to their analysis is at present not only methodologically justified but it can also be treated from practical point of view as a concrete operational need. It cannot be left unnoticed in the situation when the object of socio-economic planning become rural communes as autonomously perceived microregions, which afford an opportunity for

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creation of qualitatively new multivillage communities connected with an area assuming features of a natural area.

It can be expected that studies of the contemporary village being undertaken now and making provisions for the ecological approach will consequently produce results of great value for future decisions made in the sphere of socio-economic practice and, first of all, will enrich with new aspects formulation of theories about development of the contemporary village.

Wacław Piotrowski

#### LA ESTRUCTURALIZACIÓN ESPACIAL E INSTITUCIONAL DEL CAMPO POLACO

Se puso como el punto de partida de la ponencia la tesis, de que la reforma de administración territorial realizada en 1973 creó nuevas perspectivas de la reintegración del campo polaco en los planos social y espacial.

El estudio se refiere a las aldeas, en las cuales predominan la agricultura y la ganadería y en las cuales se manifiesta la actividad económica del campesino individual. Tal tipo de explotaciones predomina en muchas regiones de Polonia.

Los factores principales que estimularon los procesos de la reintegración social y de la formación de nueva estructura social y espacial dentro de los límites de *gmina* (la unidad administrativa básica que corresponde a los municipios de algunos países) fueron: 1) la creación de los órganos de poder y administración estatal y autónoma local; 2) la creación de las instituciones y organizaciones para locales necesidades sociales de economía producción y cultura.

El conjunto de las instituciones y las organizaciones de *gmina* integrado y coordinado por medio de los planes y objetivos locales se convierte en un sistema. Este sistema se compone de subsistemas de ramas (las instituciones y organizaciones que tienen tareas y funciones especiales) y de subterrenos constituidos por unas aldeas, por lo cual éstos pueden ser considerados como subsistemas territoriales de *gmina*. El centro del sistema, que desempeña todas las funciones principales, se encuentra en una aldea más grande o en un pueblo. Teniendo en cuenta las

posibilidades del acceso al centro de gmina y las consecuencias socio-económicas de la diferenciación que tiene lugar en este caso, se puede constatar, que una gmina media se compone en el plano espacial de unas zonas concéntricas, cuyas modificaciones dependen del sistema de la red de población, de las condiciones topográficas y de la comunicación.

Para ejemplificar la diferencia de la calidad social de diversas zonas en el estudio se ponen los ejemplos de las investigaciones empíricas sobre la actitud de los habitantes de gmina hacia varios aspectos de su medio.

Вацлав Пётровски

#### ИНСТИТУТО-ТЕРРИТОРИАЛЬНАЯ СТРУКТУРАЛИЗАЦИЯ ПОЛЬСКОЙ ДЕРЕВНИ

Основным вопросом, рассматриваемым в докладе, являются новые перспективы реинтеграции польской деревни — как в социальной, так и территориальной плоскостях — после административного деления на низшем уровне, состоявшегося в 1973 году.

Принимаются во внимание деревни, в которых преобладают животноводческие сельские хозяйства, базирующие на активности (практичности) единоличников. В настоящее время этот тип сельских хозяйств преобладает в польской деревне.

Главные факторы, стимулирующие процесс социальной реинтеграции и формирование новой социально-территориальной структуры в рамках основной единицы административного деления (гмины), это — определение местонахождения административных государственных и управленческих властей на уровне гмины и принуждение гмин к организации учреждений, способствующих удовлетворению местных хозяйственно-производственных, социально-культурных и общественных потребностей. Главные учреждения и организации, объединенные и координированные в горизонтальном отношении местными планами и задачами, превращаются в систему. Звеньями гминной системы — с одной стороны — являются отраслевые подсистемы, включающие в себя элементы и учреждения, связанные друг с другом узкоспециальными задачами и функциями — с другой же — субрайоны, в состав ко-

торых входит одна или несколько деревень и связанные друг с другом субгминной деятельностью отдельных звеньев и учреждений. Они образуют как-будто другие, ограниченные территорией, подсистемы гминной системы. На территории гмины главную роль играет центр системы, группирующий всю свою деятельность в большой деревне или городке. Принимая во внимание расстояние от гминного центра и социально-экономические последствия этой дифференциации, обычная гмина в территориальном отношении приобретает формы системы концентрических районов, с учетом преобразований в области системы поселенческой сети а также топографических и транспортных условий.

Различия между социальным качеством отдельных районов поясняются примерами на основе эмпирических исследований, касающихся отношения жителей отдельных гмин к разным сторонам окружающей среды.

Wacław Piotrowski

#### INSTYTUCJONALNO-PRZESTRZENNA STRUKTURALIZACJA WSI POLSKIEJ

Zasadniczą dla referatu jest teza, że przeprowadzona w 1973 r. reforma podziałów administracyjnych na szczeblu podstawowym otworzyła zupełnie nowe perspektywy reintegracji wsi polskiej zarówno w płaszczyźnie społecznej, jak i przestrzennej.

Rozważania odniesiono do wsi o przewadze funkcji rolniczo-hodowlanych opartych o gospodarczą aktywność indywidualnych rolników. Ten typ wsi dominuje na znacznych obszarach Polski.

Głównymi czynnikami stymulującymi procesami reintegracji społecznej i kształtowania nowej struktury społeczno-przestrzennej w ramach podstawowej jednostki podziału administracyjnego gminy, było umiejscowienie na tym szczeblu organów władzy i administracji państwowej oraz samorządowej, а także przypisanie obszarowi gminy wyposażenia w instytucje i organizacje służące zaspokajaniu lokalnych potrzeb gospodarczo-produkcyjnych, socjalno-kulturalnych i społecznych. Zbiór gminnych instytucji i organizacji integrowanych i koordynowanych poziomo lokalnymi planami i zadaniami przekształca się w system. Ogniwami gminnego systemu są z jednej strony podsystemy branżowe, na które składają się elementy i placówki powiązane

specjalistycznymi zadaniami i funkcjami, z drugiej strony - powiązane działaniami subgminnymi ogniw i placówek - podobszary, w skład których wchodzi jedna do kilku wsi. Tworzą one jak gdyby inne, wyznaczone przestrzenie, podsystemy gminnego systemu. W obszarze gminy dominuje, poprzez nastawienie na całość funkcji, ośrodek systemu, zlokalizowany w większej wsi czy miasteczku. Podobszary te, podporządkowane ze względu na odległość linearną, a przede wszystkim ekologiczną odległość od centrum zajmują zróżnicowane pozycje w strukturze gminnego terytorium. Z uwagi na możliwości dostępu do gminnego centrum i gospodarczo-społeczne konsekwencje tego zróżnicowania, przeciętna gmina w aspekcie przestrzennym przybiera postać układu stref koncentrycznych, z modyfikacjami wynikającymi z układu sieci osadniczej, warunków topograficznych i komunikacyjnych.

Odmianą społeczną jakość poszczególnych stref ilustrują przykłady zaczerpnięte z empirycznych badań, dotyczących postaw mieszkańców gminy wobec różnych aspektów ich środowiska.