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SPATIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE VILLAGE
- CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

1. An unequal process of changes in the countryside

Changes in the village are one of the most visible features of the changes in Poland of today. The surmounting of the civilization distance and taking over of the role of an important sector of the nation's economy occurred here in a shorter time than the life of one generation. Subject to the attitude, the rate and range of these changes can be evaluated in a different way. It is an unequal process which, in Poland, as in most developed or developing countries, caused that, beside the advanced spheres of life and rural production, there are still large areas of backwardness and stagnation.

In Poland, this process also has its own local specificity. These subjects require deep reflections, whereas the present text deals with only one problem: what changes are there in the spatial organization of the countryside? What undergoes changes, and what resists to them in this organization?

The use of the paradigm of "continuity and change" as a certain type of approach in the answer to these questions make it possible to indicate traditional elements beside the new ones or those resulting from the modernization. Many studies within modern sociology revert to this convention in search for signs of the symbiosis or opposition of the "old" and the "new". Not infrequently it leads to simplifications or describes certain reality features with exaggerated extremeness. The irregularity of the process of changes creates also stereotypes and superficial judgements about the countryside.

In the present text, the subject under consideration is spatial organization, i.e. a selected feature of the village treated as a system of interdependent planes: space - economy - society (community). The manner of running a farm, social structure and culture patterns determine a spatial shape of settlement and a form of building development¹. This system is affected - with different intensity - by the factors of inner-rural or outer-rural genesis. The spatial organization can be understood as a way of arranging in space elements adapted and used by communities in the process of farming. Thus understood, e.g. territorial administrative division or forms of rural building widespread locally are part of the system the other components of which can change more slowly or last with almost no changes. The aim of this text is also to show the changes of forms of the village building, but in a broader context of the spatial organization changes.

A simplified (by necessity) description of continuity and change does not consist in enumerating old or new symptoms. Such valuation must especially be free from mechanical assignment of positive or negative signs. For instance, modernization of the countryside understood as a result of industrial innovation influence, urbanization, changes of culture or other great processes is always treated as a specific invasion followed by succession. Meanwhile, the societies being modernized often make conscious selection, trying to minimize detriment caused by the modernization². And, although, along with the industrial revolution, the urbanization of the countryside has reached a stage from which there is no withdrawal³, the defense of "continuity" components frequently becomes the same necessity as the acceptance of "change". The village is not deprived of possibility of such defense to save its integrity or separate character⁴.

¹ B. J a ł o w i e c k i, Społeczeństwo, przestrzeń, gospodarka (Society, Space, Economy), "Wieś i Rolnictwo" 1984, No. 3.

² J. S z a c k i, Słowo wstępne (Introductory Note), [in:] Tradycja i nowoczesność (Tradition and Modernity), ed. J. S z a c k i, Warszawa 1984.

³ K. D a v i s, The Origin and Growth of Urbanization in the World, "American Journal of Sociology" 1955, Vol. LX, No. 5.

⁴ R. D e w e y, The Rural - Urban Continuum: real but relatively unimportant, "American Journal of Sociology" 1961, Vol. LXVI, No. 1.

Urbanization - as all over the world - is one of the main factors of the rural changes in Poland. The use of this term (taking no account of this vague character) suggests the genesis and direction of changes; they come from cities and make the village similar to urban structures or standards. The effects of urbanization are, among other things, the changes in the quality and form of the rural building, migrations to the city, similarity of behaviour following urban standards⁵. But stereotype understanding of the urbanization obscures the image of the process which occurs selectively, i.e. different elements (of spatial organization in this case) are subjected to it to an unequal extent.

The goal of this text is also to show that urbanization changes of the village in Poland refer, first at all, to the community plane (socio-cultural), and to a lesser degree, to the farming plane; whereas they occur relatively superficially on the plane of spatial organization.

2. Continuity of the spatial organization and changes in the social structure

In the rural production manner, culture and spatial organization, farmland holds the most important position. The agrarian reform in Poland after 1945 was one of the first acts of social equity in the conditions of a new political system. It was fulfilment of age - long peasants' dreams about land, it allowed them to appease their economic and emotional "hunger"⁶.

In the period before World War II peasant farming was still, to a considerable degree, of natural character, and was characterized by a small share of commodity production and autoconsumption. However, the splitting - up of the agrarian structure was the most noticeable (in 1938, 66.5% of peasant farms had the

⁵ P. Meadows, H. Mizruchi [eds.], Urbanism, Urbanization and Change: Comparative Perspectives, Reading Mass. 1969.

⁶ D. Gałaj, Socjologiczne aspekty własności ziemi (Sociological Aspects of the Land Ownership), "Wieś i Rolnictwo" 1984. No. 3.

area smaller than 6 hectares, including 33% of those under 2 hectares⁷). It was the state inherited from the period of 19th century splitting-up. The agrarian reform of 1945 comprised over a million peasant families, 254.4 thousand farms having been enlarged in the so called old territories, and 347.1 thousand farms were founded in the so called Regained Territories recaptured as a result of the post-war shift of the borders. Its main consequence, however, consisted in "averaging" of the individual agriculture structure in which medium size farms of the area of 5-10 hectares began to predominate⁸.

About 1950, the agrarian structure began to crystallize finally. It is worth illustrating with some data, also for successive periods until they reach a present-day form (data given in % for appropriate range of farm size):

	0,5-2 ha	2-5 ha	5-10 ha	10 and more ha
1950	21	33	33	13
1960	25	34	29	12
1970	27	32	29	13
1982	30	29	26	16

The above specification shows (if changes in particular ranges are neglected) that this structure has not changed over the forty post-war years and, what is more important, it still preserves its splitting-up inherited from the past. Thus, it is a petrified structure.

Numerous changes have taken place in the agricultural policy in Poland over these forty years. The years 1945-1949, the time of the agrarian reform, led to the preservation of small-scale production and small-holding structure of the countryside. The following years (1949-1956) are the period to compulsory collectivisation (made without proper technological and organisational back-up facilities, with strong resistance of peasants).

⁷ R. T u r s k i, Przemiany struktury społecznej wsi (Changes in the Social Structure of the Countryside), [in:] Struktura i dynamika społeczeństwa polskiego (Structure and Dynamics of the Polish Society), ed. W. W e s o ł o w s k i, Warszawa 1970.

⁸ Ibidem.

The year 1956 is the beginning of the period when, as a result of the fundamental change in policy, the collectivisation was stopped and the model of a "family farm" - predominant nowadays - was resumed.

The following years brought attempts at "socialization without collectivization" of the peasant farming consisting in the creation of self-management-production structures, the so-called agricultural circles and the suppression of peasant autarky by making individual producers increasingly dependent on the state distribution of means of production and purchase of farm products. After 1970, a narrow specialization of farms and - discarded relatively soon - semi-collective bodies referred to as teams of individual farmers began to be preferred in the agricultural policy. At the same time, state sector of the agricultural economy, which (in different forms) comprises about 1/5 of the whole agricultural acreage, began to be intensified. Industrial back-up facilities were developing extensively without pro-agricultural attitude, while intensive development was taking place in the agriculture. As a result, the agricultural economy has reached a stage of utilizing the so-called superficial reserves in practice⁹.

All these processes also participated in the changes which, after the war, have transformed Poland from agricultural-industrial into medium-developed, urbanized industrial-agricultural country. Among others, since 1946 the population has increased by about 14 million (60% of the former state of population), the urban population has increased 2.5 times, the national fixed assets have increased over 5 times. Distinct changes in the production technology and organization have occurred in the agriculture.

However, the most important rural changes concern the socio-occupational structure of inhabitants. Nowadays, 14.8 million people (41.8% of the total) live in the country, but 40% of them make their living solely by off-farm work and still

⁹ Z. L a n d a u, Główne tendencje rozwoju gospodarczego Polski Ludowej (Main Tendencies of the Economic Development of People's Poland), [in:] U źródeł polskiego kryzysu (At the Origin of Polish Crisis), ed. A. M u l l e r, Warszawa 1983.

another 12% avail themselves of non-farm means of living. Thus, only 22.5% of rural population are the farmers earning their living exclusively on farming. The degree of socio-occupational urbanization, measured with percentage of non-agricultural population in the countryside is different, but on the average it amounts to 43% of the total district population - basal administrative microregions, and round city agglomerations, e.g. in the south of Poland, it exceeds $3/4$ ¹⁰.

Industrial acceleration created new working places, taken, to a considerable extent, by migrants from village. In general, rural migrational losses in favour of the industry and cities amount to about 5 million in the years 1946-1978. However, they are relative losses, taking into account the fact that the rural population has remained on the same level of about 15 million since 1950 till nowadays¹¹.

Thus, two fundamental constituent categories of the village: the agrarian structure and population remain stable, defining at the same time, main aspects of "continuity"; they are accompanied on the other hand, by transformation of the social structure of inhabitants.

The structure of most socio-economic systems is, through their nature, characterized by certain inertia or petrification¹². As a result, their spatial organization must also be petrified; the Polish countryside being a good example. The economic policy, aimed at general changes in the sphere of production and overcoming development difficulties, changes of the global structure of the socio-economic systems and its organization having been neglected.

Taking into account evident changes in the image of Poland it could seem that changes in the spatial organization of in-

¹⁰ L. F r a c k i e w i c z, Sfery niedostatku (Spheres of Indigence), Warszawa 1983.

¹¹ A. S t a s i a k, Ludność i osadnictwo na obszarach wiejskich (Population and Settlement in Rural Regions), [in:] Wieś polska 2000 (Polish Countryside of 2000), Biuletyn KPZP PAN, No. 110, Warszawa 1980.

¹² S. M. K o m o r o w s k i, Przestrzenna organizacja gospodarki polskiej. Próba analizy krytycznej (Spatial Organization of Polish Economy. An Attempt at Critical Analysis), Biuletyn KPZK PAN, No. 117, Warszawa 1981.

dustry, settlement, ect. are inevitable as well. Such changes, however, have not taken place, and spatial petrification of the village is, in this situation, an example of forced continuity.

Stability of the structures arranged in the space is decisive of their spatial organization invariability. This feature particularly concerns the settlement system: it is inert in the above sense, since basic objects of this system usually have permanence exceeding their physical durability. The system of rural settlement and its spatial organization are examples of duration resistant to major functional changes.

In the administrative and political-economic dimension, the countryside is now divided into basal micro-regions, rural districts (so called gmina), reactivated in 1973. It seems that present-day gminas have confirmed the correctness of this solution over the period of their existence. But it is also worth noting that the present number of gminas (2730) is close to the number of previous Polish districts dissolved in 1954 (3001). Thus this is another indicator of continuity of the spatial organization. The global structure of the rural settlement system is, to a large extent, the function of the agrarian splitting-up. The National Census of 1978 found the number of countryside places to be 43.2 thousand, but a statistical place numbered, on the average, 435 inhabitants and 81% of these places was inhabited by fewer than 500 people¹³.

3. Continuity and change in the rural building development

What is the image of rural housing in the light of the above facts? The most distinct feature of the spatial organization changes are, above all, changes in types and forms of the housing development, but the symptoms noticeable with a "naked eye" do not signify radical transformations in this case.

The specificity of all this building movement is determined by predominance of the so called reproduction building (which consists in building a new house next to or partly on the site

¹³ S t a s i a k, op. cit.

of the old one, and it does not change the development of the lot of settlement as a rule). This is illustrated by the number characterizing the housing substance of the countryside over the past decades (data in thousands):

	Flats (houses) - total	Habitable rooms
1960	3 466	8 371
1970	3 574	10 739
1978	3 585	11 770
1983	3 760	12 651

They indicate that the steady tendency in increase in the number of habitable rooms (hence, the improvement of housing conditions) was accompanied by a considerably slower tempo of increase in the number of new apartment buildings. Totally, the increase in such buildings in the years 1950-1978 is estimated to be 16%; while the average number of habitable rooms increased by 45% at the same time¹⁴.

Thus, the village changes its housing substance relatively slowly, but in the manner resulting in no consequences for the spatial organization. A considerable part of the housing resources dates back from before 1918: 17.1%, another 29.3% was built in 1918-1944¹⁵. It means that almost half of the buildings represent relatively traditional conventions of rural building and its "continuity" in the aesthetic and functional sense. Assuming that war losses in the countryside building amounted to about 22%¹⁶, then the post-war changes will turn out to be only incomplete reproduction of the housing substance, which can be considered another aspect of the spatial organization invariability. These comments do not refer to rural buildings for livestock, where the process of substitution is faster and gives

¹⁴ M. G o r c z y c a, Zróżnicowanie regionalne stopnia zaspokojenia potrzeb mieszkaniowych (Regional Differentiation of the Degree of Satisfaction of Housing Needs), Studia KPZK PAN, Vol. LXXVII, Warszawa 1981.

¹⁵ M. C h i l c z u k, J. S i e m i ń s k i, Przekształcenia osadnictwa wiejskiego w Polsce (Transformations of Rural Settlement in Poland), Warszawa 1977.

¹⁶ Ibidem.

larger increase in the new substance. It should be added that housing and farm investment in the peasant agriculture are diversified quantitatively in particular regions of the country.

Despite these signs of inertia ("continuity") in the spatial organization, fast architectural changes in the rural landscape are facts. Against the wishes of amateurs of folk material culture, the former rural building and different regions of building with specific stylistic and functional solutions have nearly disappeared¹⁷.

The most popular and the worst, as regards good taste, is a model of the house with a flat roof, quite unrelated to the patterns of rural building. Only in the regions of traditionally strong stylistic separateness, e.g. in the piedmont region of the Tatras there is a tendency to match it with the local standards.

The blame for the pauperization of the modern village building development is attributed to the weakness of spatial pre-planning the non-realization of plans and the inconsistency of the architectural policy towards the countryside¹⁸. One tries to lay the responsibility on Athen's Chart and its postulates of extreme functionalism which, used on a large scale, turned into distortedly poor provincialism. This diagnosis is correct, although it does not describe the entire problem. It should be noted here, following a well-known theory of centres and peripheries¹⁹ that all the variations of the pattern usually differ from the original in the socio-cultural circulation. On the other hand, the geometrized and simplified urban architecture is a reference model for the "box-like" rural building.

The studies of preferences of the population of selected districts (gminas) for spatial pre-planning²⁰ allowed us to find out what popularity some definite types of building gained.

¹⁷ M. P o k r o p e k, Budownictwo ludowe w Polsce (Folk Building in Poland), Warszawa 1976.

¹⁸ W. K o s i ń s k i, Stan i perspektywy odnowy krajobrazu wsi polskiej (State and Prospects for the Restoration of Polish Countryside Landscape), Biuletyn KPZK PAN, No. 110, Warszawa 1980.

¹⁹ E. A. S h i l s, Center and Periphery, [in:] Logic and Personal Knowledge, [ed.] E. A. S h i l s, London 1961.

²⁰ M. K o w a l s k i, A. M a j e r, P. S t a r o s t a,

For instance, in the gmina of Piława, situated in the neighbourhood of medium size town Siedlce, 42% of respondents (most of all) preferred a double-storied, one-family house with a high cellar and with a hip-roof, corresponding to the most popular standard of cubic "box" mentioned above. We think, however, that this choice could depend on a number of factors.

Firstly, it disclosed a tendency to imitate "the city character" understood in stereotype fashion, with the modern predominance of cubic forms of building-up. The aspiring of the countryside rising in cultural status to outer signs of the "urban character" has its important, prestige dimension, and breaking up with tradition can be felt, in this case, as a measure of progress.

Secondly, what may be the most important, such building satisfies a number of essential conditions, namely: it uses cheap and available ready-made designs and is relatively easiest to realize by one's own means, without any special territorial development and with personal participation of investors, using the materials available in the market.

Thirdly, the cubic architecture gives possibilities of obtaining relatively big usable area, which fulfils both functional and prestige criteria (the house is large and suitably "large-scale", thanks to it). If the petrification of the spatial organization described above is also taken into account, then the choice of this model of an apartment building-planned, as a rule, for a few generations and a possible decision to start building is accounted for, first of all, by practical respect of spaciousness, simplicity of execution and durability. The fact of preference of this type of standard can be treated as an effect of choice of the things, out of the urban offer, that meet a real demand of the countryside. In other words, we think that the outwardly "antirural" preferences hide rational calculation of costs and effects of the realization. They are the criteria close to traditional, rural utilitarianism or peasant's common sense. This traditionalism has also its technical and civilization

Potrzeby i oczekiwania mieszkańców wobec planu przestrzennego gminy (Needs and Expectations of Inhabitants Towards the Gminas Spatial Planning [not publ.], Łódź 1985.

dimension. Only every fifth rural flat is equipped with running water, every tenth with a WC, and 1 in 10 uses gas from the gas grid²¹. They are very few private telephones in the countryside.

Whereas, other studies on the inhabitants' attitudes towards the habitation environment²² carried out at the end of 1970s in 9 districts (gminas) of different regions of Poland, allowed us to state, among other things, that both in new and old buildings the centre of functioning of the family is still, like in the past, the kitchen, in which most of household-family activities take place and which corresponds to the functions of a city living-room and a bedroom. This pattern of organization of the family life has a long tradition and is a repetition of a functional division of the old cottage into a "white"-festive part and a "black" one, used every day. It concerned even multi-roomed buildings inhabited by non-farmers. Only every fifth, out of 1664 farms studied, has technical or functional indices of urbanization of the family life style, and they did not result from the standard of flats but from individual preferences of users. On the whole, the qualities of the countryside as the environment of living determined the attitudes towards one's own flat.

4. Between continuity and change

Stable elements of the spatial organization create a state of unintentional, relative but - as we thought - accepted by the village "continuity". One has tried to point out these features of continuity which are inherited from the past and the "change" of which by degrees seems to be functional necessity. The other objective size by retardation, e.g. the weakness of technical infrastructure and farming service centres, underdeveloped network of roads or, finally, communal-economic backwardness of the

²¹ S t a s i a k, op. cit.

²² A. M a j e r, Środowisko mieszkalne w postawach ludności gmin (Habitable Environment in the Attitudes of Communities Inhabitants) [doctoral dissert., not publ.], Łódź 1984. It was a result of the studies carried out by the team of the Department of Rural And Urban Sociology of the University of Łódź in the years 1977-1980, supervised by Prof. Dr Wacław Piotrowski.

countryside have been neglected. The backwardness of development in relation to its inhabitants' aspirations and needs have also been disregarded.

Dominated by individual ownership, the agriculture is still trying to find its place and chances for growth in the conditions of socialist system of Poland. The fact that the objective (organizational-spatial) and subjective (socio-cultural) planes do not overlap any more is a symptom of proceeding changes in the village and a forecast of their direction. The civilizing promotion of the village will, more and more openly, force a progress in the economy and space, but undoubtedly, an evolutionary and corresponding to adaptation needs of the inhabitants. For the present, the place of the village, in relation to other elements of the social structure, is midway between "continuity" and "change".

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ORGANIZACJA PRZESTRZENNA WSI W POLSCE
- CIĄGŁOŚĆ I ZMIANA

1. Nierównomierny proces przemian wsi.

Zmiany na wsi są jedną z najbardziej widocznych cech procesu przemian we współczesnej Polsce. Mimo to zachodzą w sposób nierównomierny - wobec zaawansowanych dziedzin produkcji i życia występują na wsi przemiany; elementy "ciągłości" mieszają się z występowaniem "zmiany". Organizacja przestrzenna wsi, rozumiana odpowiednio szeroko jako element układu przestrzeni - gospodarka - społeczeństwo, jest przykładem sfery, w której widoczne gołym okiem zmiany (m. in., zabudowy wsi) występują obok tendencji do petryfikacji. Najszybciej zmieniała się po wojnie struktura społeczno-zawodowa mieszkańców wsi, w mniejszym stopniu - sposób gospodarowania, najmniejsze zmiany dotyczą płaszczyzny organizacji przestrzennej.

2. Ciągłość organizacji przestrzennej i zmiany struktury społecznej.

W wiejskim sposobie produkcji i organizacji przestrzennej najważniejszą rolę odgrywa ziemia uprawna, tymczasem struktura agrarna zdominowana przez indywidualne rolnictwo przedstawia obraz rozdrobnienia i nie ulega zmianom. Nie zdołały jej zmienić następujące po sobie reorientacje polityki rolnej i dziś stanowi ona dysfunkcjonalny element gospodarki wiejskiej, świadcząc zarazem o swoistej "ciągłości" organizacji przestrzennej. Mimo poważnych zmian składu społeczno-zawodowego mieszkańców wsi i "kurczenia się" rolników, produkcja wiejska utrzymuje się na nie zmie-

nionym poziomie. Niezmienna jest także struktura osadnicza. Wszystkie te aspekty występują obok procesów, które po wojnie zasadniczo przeobraziły Polskę.

3. Ciągłość i zmiana w zabudowie wsi.

Zabudowa mieszkalna wsi zmienia się najszybciej pod względem formy, lecz nie pociąga to za sobą zmian w organizacji przestrzennej i strukturze osadniczej. Ponadto niemal połowa wiejskich budynków reprezentuje dawne konwencje budownictwa. Zmiany "pejzażu architektonicznego", wielokrotnie krytykowane - wprowadzają na wsi obce, niewiejskiego rodowodu wzory budowlane (np. pudełkowe pseudowille). Jak pokazują badania, antywiejskie preferencje w wyborze wzorów zabudowy są podyktowane kalkulacją opartą na tradycyjnej "zdroworozsądkowości" i odwiecznym utylitaryzmie, stając przykładami "zmiany" przemieszanej z elementami dziedzicznymi. Z kolei w domach nowo wznoszonych na wiejską modę można odnotować tradycyjne wzory użytkowania przestrzeni mieszkalnej.

4. Między ciągłością a zmianą.

Wymienione wyżej elementy organizacji przestrzennej tworzą stan względnej petryfikacji. Postępujące na wsi zmiany i procesy będą wymierzać zwrot ku nowoczesnej organizacji przestrzennej, która dziś jeszcze sytuuje się między ciągłością a zmianą.