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TYOLOGY OF PERIPHERAL RURAL AREAS – ANATOMIC¹ APPROACH

Abstract: The study makes an attempt at defining the peripheral rural areas in Poland, and then grouping them by similarity of socio-economic features. We verified the hypothesis that rural areas with a generally similar level of socio-economic development in Poland, form heterogeneous sets due to the various socio-economic functions formed earlier. Therefore, they have different problems and challenges to face on the way to rural development, and discussion of a single universal model of those areas, even in the regions with a statistically similar level of development is impossible.

The statistical procedure of community grouping disclosed the occurrence of three types of peripheral areas, which differ among them but which are relatively coherent internally. Their characteristics, in terms of the socio-economic structure, shows the formation of different anatomic models of peripheral areas (eastern, northern and southern), which are discussed in the paper, complete with their spatial distribution. In view of the diversity of the endogenous resources of rural areas, there is a need to develop such a concept of development, which shall not flatten the reality by its universalism and shall be territorially oriented on local potentials.

Key words: Rural areas, peripheral areas, the level of socioeconomic development, the method of linear and nonlinear ordering, cluster analysis, typology.

1. Theoretical background

The word “peripheries” in itself bears a distance, primarily linked with a distance in a geographical sense. In social sciences we find several types of definitions of a peripheral area. One of them is based on a spatial aspect, it defines peripheries as areas distant from economically strong urban centres, which are difficult to reach in terms of communication. In such a situation, postulates for the improvement of the infrastructural accessibility, with a particular focus on communication, are the basic

¹ Anatomy is understood as analysis of similarities and differences in structure, in this case the socio-economic structure of rural areas.

recommendation. Most often, this criterion is linked with the demographic criterion (low population density in the given area). Counteracting peripherality thus understood is based on the idea of the construction of local centres, stimulation of the settlement grid to curb excessive emigration leading to the depopulation of peripheral areas [Grosse 2007, p. 45-46].

Another group of definitions relates to the economic criteria, most often based on the measures of the level of economic development. Among those, the *GDP per capita*² indicator is the most often used for the determination of peripheral areas, though accessibility of these data depends on the level of aggregation of the administrative units. Other measures of peripherality describe the low level of development of entrepreneurship, innovation, infrastructure, monofunctionality of the economy. Measuring the distance in economic terms is the reason why the peripherality issues are most often studied in multiple aspects. Here, the decisive role is not played by a single factor – as geographical distance in the spatial approach, but numerous elements of the socio-economic sphere are taken into consideration, *e.g.* standard of living, access to new technologies, attractiveness of the labour market.

Some of the definitions based on economic conditions clearly indicate to the dependence of peripheral areas on the cores of development [Rokkan *et al.* 1987, p. 9, 40 and following].

This relation may be implemented through diffusion or drainage of capital. Most often the regional poles of socio-economic development absorb the factors which affect them positively from the surroundings, thus weakening the development of peripheries. Such development takes place on the grounds of the non-sustainable development concept – the theory of polarization and the centre – peripheries concept [more in: Grosse 2002, p. 28-30; Heffner 2003, p. 11-27].

A reverse situation also takes place – the diffusion effect, when *e.g.* certain investments or lifestyles propagate from the centre to distant areas, however, it is usually weaker than the effect of the “drainage” of capital³.

The above⁴ ways of defining the peripheral areas require various actions under public policy. They may be split to such, which prefer various forms of external support and such which emphasize the development of internal potential of the peripheral regions. In general, they are based on two groups of theoretical concepts. The first concept relates to exogenic development, with the underlying conviction that solely external factors (investments) may initiate the development of the peripheral areas, and the internal capital here is insufficient (or dormant). However, exogenous

² In the EU areas exhibiting *GDP per capita* below 75% of the Community average are classified as peripheral.

³ It should be noted, however, that the greater the impact of the propagation effect, the quicker the economic development of a peripheral area.

⁴ Apart from the herein specified criteria of defining the peripheral areas, it is worthwhile to mention also the cultural, religious or political dimension of inhabitants of these areas, as described in greater detail by [Zarycki 2007, p. 5-25].

assumptions are associated with the risk of excessive dependence of development processes on external investments (including social and political assistance). The second concept relates to endogenous development, based on intraregional resources. Supporters of this idea believe that autonomy guarantees permanence of development. Endogenous development is an opportunity for avoiding development which depends on the national metropolitan centres (*i.e.* based on a mechanism of social transfer and its redistribution to raise the low standards of living in the peripheries of the region). Moreover, it reduces the risk of dependence on external investors, who create a regional monoculture which is not linked to local resources, and thus easy to allocate. Development based on internal factors builds a local labour market, hampers the migration outflow, hence the inhabitants of the peripheries work for their own well-being, not that of the central regions.

The question which arises is, which actions generate development incentives, translated to development opportunities in the long-term? I believe that in the conditions of diversified socio-economic space of the rural areas in Poland, we need a concept of proportion of both development models depending on the identified weak and strong points of the socio-economic development in the peripheral regions [also compare Rosner 2010a].

2. Objective of the survey

This study will attempt at defining the peripheral rural areas in Poland, and then splitting them into groups by the similarities of their socio-economic features⁵. The development features which should become a basis for modelling the local development strategies, essentially based on internal factors shall be identified in the peripheral areas. The adequate concentration of external public aid is of a complementary, although – paradoxally – key importance for the development of marginalized regions. The basic issue consists in the proper orientation of aid instruments depending on the situation in the given region. The support programmes should be oriented on activating the local development potential, not solely on the redistribution of funds to the peripheral regions. That is just why the qualitative assessment of the level of socio-economic development should be the core element of the regional policy related to the peripheral areas.

A hypothesis was expressed that, in Poland, rural areas with a generally similar level of socio-economic development form anatomically heterogeneous sets in terms

⁵ The study includes statistical materials from my own research grant N114 207634, „Determinants of diversification of the level of socio-economic development in Polish rural areas. The problem of pursuing the cohesion policy in regional scale vs. cohesion or polarization on intraregional local systems. Regional development centres vs. peripheral area modelling in the regional development concept of the policy of cohesion”.

of the various socio-economic functions (features) formed earlier. For these reasons, they face different problems and challenges on their way to rural development, and it is impossible to discuss a single universal model of these areas, even in the regions with a statistically similar level of development. In view of the diversity of endogenous resources of rural areas, there is a need to develop such a development concept which shall not flatten the reality by its universalism and shall be territorially oriented on the local potentials.

The determination of peripheral rural areas requires the adoption of clear and logical criteria for their delimitation. It was assumed, firstly that peripherality shall not define the distance to major centres, or areas which are hardly accessible by communication, but it will define a feature of the community, in which the established economic structures do not provide decent means for support and lead to unfavourable phenomena (as unemployment, depopulation, social marginalisation, rural monofunctionality). Secondly, assuming that the level of socio-economic development in rural areas shall be understood as the presence of certain structures and economic functions capable of generating sources of support for the local community, then the peripheral areas shall be a synonym of a low level of development. It shall be defined relatively, as a sum of its components.

It was adopted that, in the Polish conditions, the level of socio-economic development should take into account the characteristics of the demographic structure, the characteristics of the local community, the characteristics of the labour market, the level of deagrarianisation of the local economy, the characteristics of the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors of the economy. An aggregate thus composed required the selection of a suitable base of empirical indicators, describing the structural aspects of the given problem. The selection of variables was difficult to determine, as the data collected for all the units participating in the survey had to be collected according to the same methodology⁶. Furthermore, the spatial range of the analysis includes rural areas in Poland, determined in local aggregation, making a set of 2172 communities.

3. Methods of survey

The undertaking required a two-stage approach in the survey, hence the application of various methods of multidimensional comparative analysis. In the first stage, the non-model method of linear ordering was used for the determination of the level of

⁶ The multiaspect feature of the subject of the survey required the need to use diversified data sources, starting with mass statistical data for 2006-2009, i.e. the Regional Data Bank of the Central Statistical Office, with the 2002 National Census, Institute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation in Puławy, Agency for Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture, Central Commission for Education, Commission of National Elections, through information from the Ministry of Finance.

rural socio-economic development in Poland and for the choice of the set of peripheral communities [more in: Panek 2009, p. 64].

The synthetic indicator was computed for the individual communities with a unified range of variability⁷, followed by their simple grouping into 3 equipotent classes with a similar level of development (724 units in each class).

The group of communities included in the lowest class was treated as a set of peripheral areas and it was the subject of a further statistical procedure to study it in terms of the internal diversification of the profile of the level of socio-economic development (*i.e.* the combination of its adopted components). At this stage the agglomeration method of non-linear ordering was used, followed by an analysis of the agglomerations (optimisation method), with the use of a procedure based on a gravity model in a multidimensional space [more in: Diday *et al.* 1982]. In general, the survey consisted in grouping the communities into types, so that every iteration increased the value of the target function, *i.e.* to minimize variability within types and maximize that between them. Selection of the number of classes was based on a link tree (the so-called dendrogram), obtained during the data exploration phase. After obtaining a stable configuration (optimisation phase), inspection of the profile of individual types was commenced. For easier interpretation of the received values, which define the distance between the determined parameters, the resulting data on the location of the centre of gravity of individual types were replaced with descriptive assessment. The characteristics of the relative value of each synthetic variable in the type was expressed in a scale of scores: very low, low, medium, high, very high. The meaning of the terms indicates to the deviation of the centre of gravity of the given variable in the type from the centre of gravity of the whole set of variables.

4. Spatial location of peripheral communities based on the synthetic measurement of the level of socio-economic development

The level of socio-economic development was defined with the use of criteria described by empirical variables. Each of the adopted criteria is an aggregate of the features characterizing the structure of the socio-economic space. Obviously, the selection of the components of the notion is not of a universal nature. The study included such composition of indices which, by principle, was to reflect the key issues of the regional structure of Polish rural areas. The following criteria were taken into consideration: 1) the characteristics of the demographic structure, 2) the characteristics of the local community, 3) the characteristics of the labour market, 4) the scope of dea-

⁷ In the survey this indicator was construed on the assumption that all of the features are equivalent at every level of generalization.

grarianisation of local economy, 5) the characteristics of the agricultural sector, and 6) the characteristics of the non-agricultural sector⁸.

When building the demographic indices serving the characteristics of spatial differentiations, the most typical features of the “age pyramid” were taken into consideration, using measures as simple for interpretation as possible. The old age of the population was taken into account in demographic terms, demographic dynamics showing the direction of change in the structure according to age and the scale of feminisation in the 20-34 age group which, in spatial terms, discloses the effects of spatial mobility of population, besides the sex deformation.

The characteristics of the local community was by far the most difficult criterion to define. The range of features comprised in the *Ss* aggregate is very broad, whereas the possibility of operationalization is very narrow, due to the scarce accessibility to data collected according to the same methodology for the whole country. Finally, it was assumed that a preferable situation is when the elements of human capital and the social capital reach a relatively high level. The assessment of the quality of the human resources included the structure of education. The quantification of the second resource is more complex. It was decided to start with the measurement of civil activity and the generally understood inhabitants’ capacity to collaboration on a social interest. Then it was adopted that the passive participation of the local community in public life, often resulting from the low level of education and wealth, is a destimulant of development. The share of the customers of social assistance [Rosner, Stanny 2007, p. 103] was, therefore, adopted as the measure of the poverty measure in the local structure.

In the existing conditions of a large surplus of labour in rural areas, the characteristics of the labour market has a specific position. This criterion describes the scale of the surplus labour supply, through analysis of the intensity of the registered unemployment and the redundant agricultural employment (interpreted as the measure of unemployment hidden in agriculture). The employment indicator, describing the labour demand, was introduced as the balancing element. The attractiveness of the local economy, or literally of the labour market, is confirmed by the indices of spatial mobility of the population, since people migrate to improve their well being, and the economic aspects are the major motivation for migration. Moreover, migrants leave locations which are not attractive, where the negative incentives are relatively strong, heading for absorbing locations, where the economic and social offer is broader⁹. This

⁸ Most obviously the specified aspects are interconnected, though they are of an independent nature and omission of any one of them would impoverish the analysis. It should be noted that the above set lacks a *stricte* financial and infrastructural subject. These elements are important factors, creating definite conditions for future economic growth. However, the analysis was not intended to identify the determinants of that development, but to feature its level through the analysis of the local structures, which are capable of generating a decent income for the inhabitants and avoiding unfavourable phenomena (*e.g.* agrarian overpopulation, depopulation, unemployment).

⁹ This not being innovative anyway, these relationships are described in the so-called Ravenstein’s migration laws of 1889 – [Balicki *et al.* 2003, p. 43].

is why this study introduced the migration effectiveness measure which, combined with the unemployment and employment indices, presents a synthetic description of the situation on the local labour market.

The reduction of agricultural employment and the growth of non-agricultural employment is a desirable direction in rural development. Obviously, the processes of diversification of the rural labour market are advanced, however, the problem of redundant employment in agriculture remains valid. Before indicating to features identifying the economic structure of the community, let's introduce the criterion discussing the economic proportions of the already formed sectoral structure. It is the indicator of the level of deagrarianisation of the local economy, which is focused on the assessment of individual local systems in terms of departure from the traditional predomination of agriculture in rural areas in favour of other economic functions [Rosner 2010, p. 13].

The progress of the process of development of non-agricultural economic functions was measured by the determination of the proportion of non-agricultural business entities in the general number of businesses and the diversification of the sources of income – both in individual agricultural holdings and in households in all.

The characteristics of the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors were distinguished by the dichotomous definition of the economic functions of rural areas. The level of development of the agricultural function was determined in economic categories, with complete disregard of the agritechnical issues and natural conditions. The synthetic measure was based on indicators describing: the marketability, the concentration of the land in individual agriculture, financial support under the RDP. Moreover, it was assumed that the higher the agricultural competence of the managerial staff and the share of hired labour, the more favourable the situation in agriculture.

Assessment of the development of the non-agricultural functions of economy [*Spr*] was more difficult to operationalize due to the lack of suitable data in statistics, *e.g.* relating to the employment structure. The non-agricultural sector was characterized based on the entrepreneurship indicator, the share of non-agricultural households or businesses delivering public services, indicating indirectly, where the local non-agricultural labour market fosters multifunctional development.

The criteria described above added up to the scope of the notion of socio-economic development. A single synthetic measure was obtained by summing up all its 23 variables, which were earlier standardized. In this way we obtained a series of 2172 hierarchized administrative units, which then had to be split into classes of development level. And here we faced an essential, though technical dilemma in the suggested statistical procedure, namely what criterion should be adopted for classification? Finally a simple delimitation method was adopted, *i.e.* division into three equipotent classes: high, medium and low level of socio-economic development, each counting 724 communities.

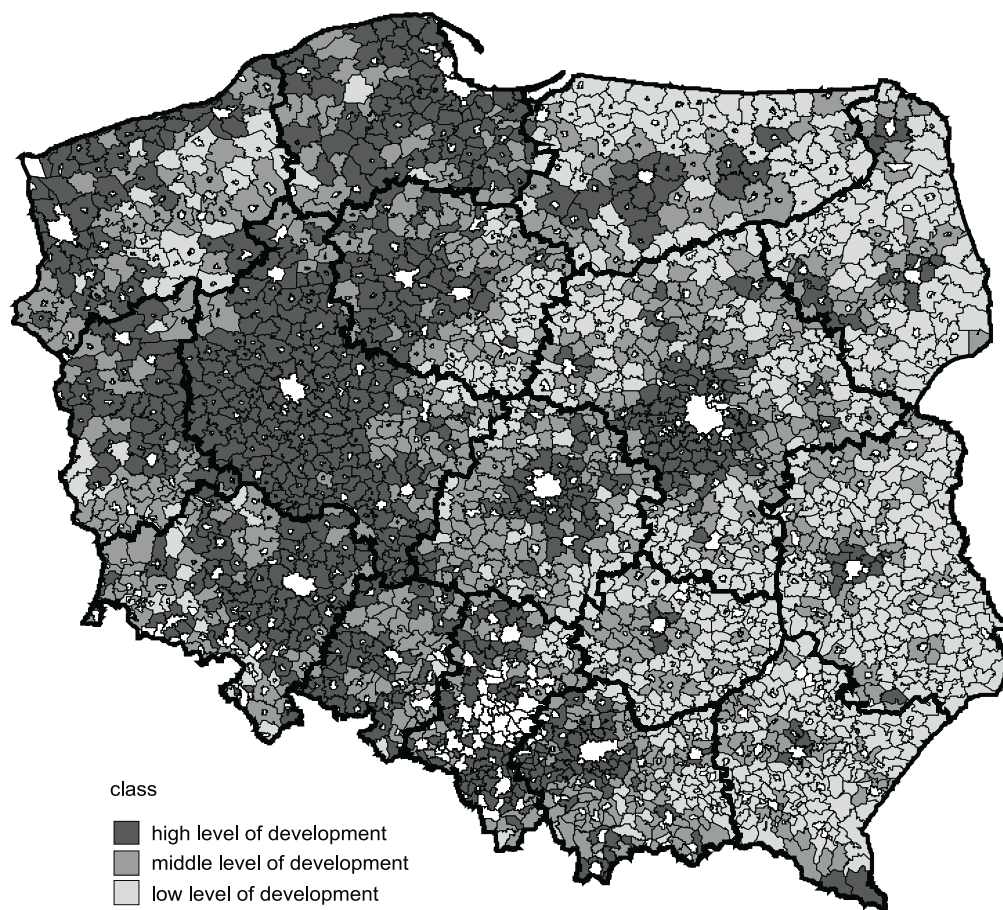


Figure 1. Synthetic measure of the level of socio-economic development – by the hierarchic method
Source: Own study.

The spatial distribution of the obtained synthetic measure of the level of the socio-economic development shows (Fig. 1), that rural areas in the western part of the country are developed better than in the eastern part. Wielkopolska is the predominating compact area of the high level development, with the adjoining central part of Lubuskie Voivodeship, the northern part of the Dolnośląskie voivodeship, and the south-western part of Kujawsko-Pomorskie. In Pomorze, a high level of socio-economic development was reached by the communities in the Kaszuby region and a major part of the communities in the coastal strip between Koszalin and Szczecin. Furthermore, we can distinguish several areas of insular nature, such as the lake district communities in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship, or the vicinity of Cracow on the southern side. In Eastern Poland, the largest enclave of the favourable socio-economic structure of rural areas is formed by the Warsaw agglomeration, the impact of which reaches as far as even the fifth circle of sub-urban communities

(clearly expanded on the western side). In the Mazowieckie Voivodeship we have an example of a “drainage basin” of positive parameters of socio-economic development, from the zone of voivodeship boundaries towards the centre, which ultimately creates a classic core-peripheries system [Rosner 2010, p. 13].

The communities with a low level of development, which have been classified as peripheral areas in accordance with the assumptions described earlier, dominate in the eastern part of the country (the Podlaskie, Lubelskie, Świętokrzyskie, Małopolskie, Warmińsko-Mazurskie and Mazowieckie Voivodeships). The main zone of concentration indicates to their subregional location, as the spatial distribution almost follows the run of administrative boundaries between voivodeships. Where the boundary of a voivodeship is crossed by a communication route, the value of the synthetic indicator allows a one class up classification of the unit. This explicitly indicates to the benefits of place, resulting from the infrastructural development (the transit function of the community), which generate the needs for multifunctional development of the area. In the western part of the country, the low level of the development class is the only point of occurrence. If we made a symbolic meridian-wise cut on the map along the Gdańsk-Katowice line, then their share on the western side will amount to about 8% of total units counted into this class. The largest aggregate is cumulated in the central part of Pomorze Zachodnie, including communities defined as “post state-owned farm communities”.

The gap between the high and low level of development is filled by the medium level class, which is an intermediary zone. Its biggest sets in western Poland may be found at the subregional boundary of voivodeships. In eastern Poland, the medium class communities form a narrow buffer zone between the regional centres and the areas classified as the peripheral zone.

5. Non-hierarchical typology of peripheral regions – anatomy of the socio-economic structure

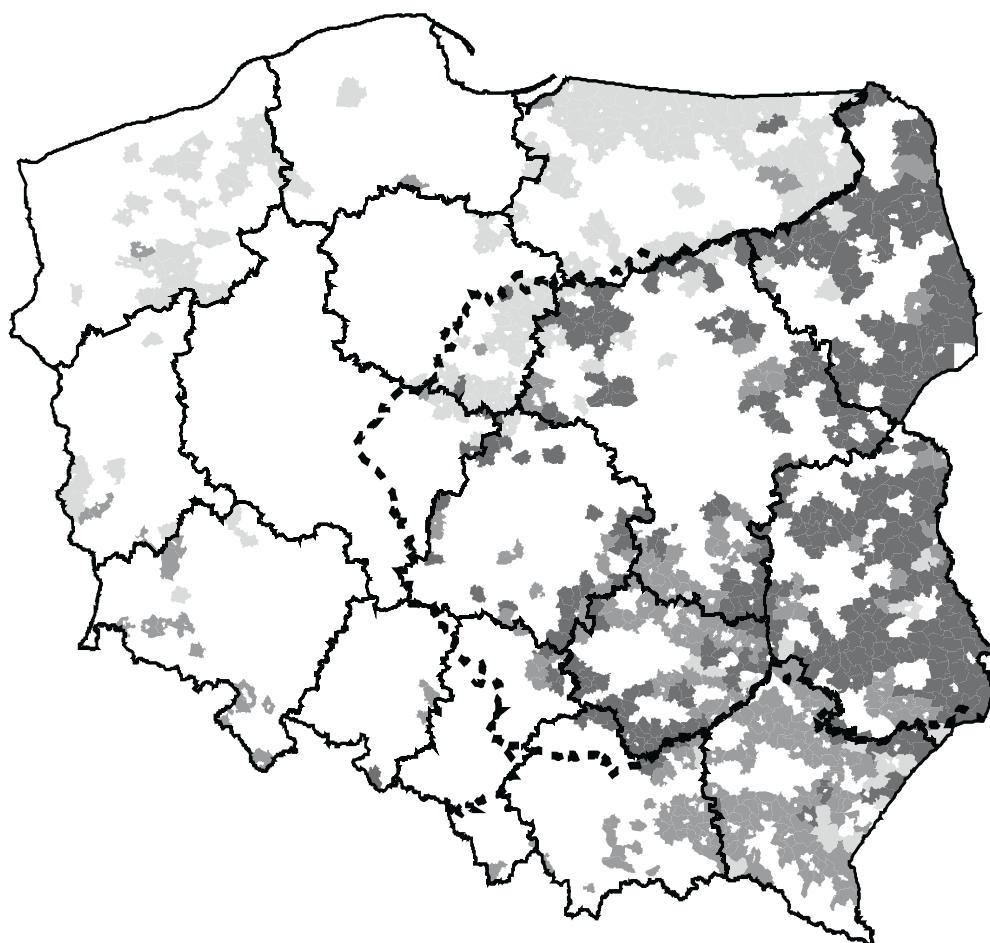
The adopted components of the notion of the level of socio-economic development became the basis for the structural analysis of the peripheral areas (which, as assumed, covered a group of 724 communities with the lowest level of socio-economic development). Namely, a question was formulated: *how differentiated are the peripheral areas in terms of the combination of synthetic features describing the level of socio-economic development?* It was assumed that there is no single anatomic model of peripheral areas, since achievement of the same target “rural development” in Polish rural areas takes place based on different scenarios.

The taxonomic method, applied to determine the level of socio-economic development, was used to build synthetic indicators for its individual components. These were

used as conditions for grouping communities in the typological procedure. The method of aggregate analysis (by optimisation method) used, allowed distinguishing types in terms of similarities and differences in the components of the level of development. Exploration of the data was based on a gravity model in a six-dimensional space (determined by six synthetic indicators). In view of the fact that the model assumes the necessity of assigning weight to individual units, the number of rural population in a community was assumed as a weight for the computations. The grouping procedure disclosed three types, and their spatial distribution is presented in Fig. 2. It also comprises the description of the characteristics of individual types in a tabular form, informing about the relative assessment of the level of development of the individual components in the given type. The types distinguished differ between them (heterogeneously) and they are relatively coherent internally (homogeneously), and simultaneously their concentration in space indicates a strong influence of a historical nature. Namely, the long-term division of the country during the Partitions (1795-1918) between the three superpowers (Russia, Prussia and Austria) with differing levels of socio-economic development and the change in the administrative borders after WW II and the associated mass migrations seem to be the key determinants in the obtained classification of peripheral areas. Furthermore, uneven investment in Poland during the Polish People's Republic period (1945-1989) and the resulting differentiated level of industrialisation and urbanization, have made certain economic structures permanent. The combination of the economic factors was additionally complemented with natural and cultural conditions.

Type (1) communities are concentrated mainly in the voivodeships of Podlaskie and Lubuskie and in the subregional zones of the voivodeships of: Mazowieckie, Świętokrzyskie and Łódzkie, including almost half of all the communities classified as rural peripheral areas in Poland. They are basically distinguished by the relatively low evaluation in terms of demographic characteristics, indicating the depopulated nature of the area and the lowest level of development of the non-agricultural function. Due to its geographical location, this aggregation is defined as the eastern type.

The demographically old age of this area translates into an apparently favourable situation in the labour market. The low percentage of the population in the production age group is the reason for the above average values of employment levels. The low percentage of those employed outside agriculture and the low demand for hired labour in agriculture explicitly define the economic monofunctionality of the region, based on family farming. The relatively low level of deagrarianisation of the structure of local economy, highly positively correlated with the assessment of the non-agricultural sector prove the lack of diversification of the sources of income of the population. Assessment of the agricultural economy sector is above average, and the economy mainly consists of a large share of commercial production farms. However, it is worthwhile to add, that the value of the coefficient which defines the centre of gravity in this type is lower than in the case of the type distinguished in the northern part of the country (3).



Type	Number of communities	Evaluation of the development of particular categories in type, in relation to the whole category:					
		demographic structure	social situation	labour market	deagrarianisation	agricultural sector	non-agricultural sector
1 eastern ■	337	low	high	high	low	high	low
2 southern ■	230	high	high	low	high	low	high
3 northern □	157	high	very low	low	medium	high	medium

Figure 2. Type of peripheral rural areas

Source: Own elaboration.

The second type (2) presents the contrary nature of economic structure. It includes 30% of the units, concentrating the largest percentage of the total population of the peripheral areas (41%). It is an area with the relatively high density of the settlement grid, a high concentration of population and simultaneously an agrarian overpopulation. It includes communities located mainly in the voivodeship of Podkarpackie, the eastern part of the voivodeship of Małopolska and in the region of the former Central Industrial District (now among others the Staropolski Industrial District), hence its definition as the southern type. In the first case it is an area of fragmented, peasant/labourer farming (former Galicja), where the combination of income from farming with income from hired work outside agriculture is typical. The CID region, in turn, was featured by the occurrence of monofunctional towns (based on one branch of industry) and rural areas with solely agricultural functions, with farms of self-supply type. In terms of the economic structure this area was very poor, therefore restructuring of the sole industry in the town caused growth of unemployment¹⁰.

Transformations in the non-agricultural sectors of national economy after 1990 lead to serious disturbance in the labour market structure. Particularly in the voivodeships of Podkarpackie and Małopolskie, loss of employment by the so-called “dual professionals” induced a growth of unemployment hidden in agriculture, simultaneously the numbers of registered unemployed grew. Here, diversification of the sources of income of the rural population depends on the absorbing capacity of the urban labour market to a particular extent. Alternate migrations are the key factor raising its level. Podkarpackie is a demographically “young” region, and in terms of population structure it is the complete contrary to communities situated in the territory under the former Russian rule (see the eastern type). However, both these regions have one common element to be noted, namely the relatively favourable social capital [Herbst 2008, p. 173]; Kamiński 2010, p. 161-162].

The third type of peripheral communities (3) – the northern type, may also be defined as a post state-owned farm region, due to the concentration of nationalized agricultural economy there till 1990. The process of restructuring state-owned agriculture led to the present structure of the agricultural sector, which may be defined as large-area agriculture, based also on hired labour. Although the share of commercialised holdings among family holdings is average, similar to the level of education among farmers, the general assessment of this sector is positive. A medium level score may be assigned to the non-agricultural business development. A social passivity in the public life of the inhabitants, the acquired attitude of taking too much for granted, with reproduction of the “poverty culture” fairly generally propagated in post state-owned farm areas, are the weakest links in the socio-economic structure of this type.

¹⁰ Analogous situation may be also found in the areas of the former state-owned farms in north-western Poland. The only difference being that in the CID region, the unemployed originated from the industrial sector, while in the so-called former state-owned farm areas they came from social agriculture. The results of these processes bear down on those areas even now.

They correlate with an insufficient level of competence (measured by the percentage of the population with an education higher than primary). So low is the capital of local communities, which is the legacy of not only the nationalized economy but also an effect of the social mosaic of the post-war migration processes, it may be insufficient to stimulate the permanent development of peripheral areas [Grosse 2007, p. 182].

The immigrative nature of the Western and Northern Lands of Poland does not only disclose the lack of historical continuity of the traditional forms of social activities, but also demographic resilience. Hence the relatively high score for the demographic structure, for which the indicators show similar values as for the voivodeship of Podkarpackie. However, also here an excessive labour supply (poorly qualified and often with acquired passive attitude toward work), vs. a low labour demand is the cause of the highly unbalanced labour market.

Summary

The above analysis confirms the initially posed hypothesis that rural areas with a generally similar level of socio-economic development in Poland form heterogeneous sets due to the various socio-economic functions formed. Hence their different problems and challenges on their way to development. This structure discloses the features of lagging, as a result of historical events.

The three distinguished types, despite their similar, relatively low levels of socio-economic development, are greatly differentiated, thus requiring an intervention in different aspects. The analysis allows the presentation of several suggestions. The first type discussed (eastern) with depopulation features, requires an infrastructural security for the development of multifunctional agriculture [Wilkin 2010, p. 19-29]. Its activity, oriented outside the holding, should serve to satisfy the environmental, cultural, social and production needs of the population. The social activity of the inhabitants should be a fostering factor.

A steady growth of economic urbanization could be recommended for the second type of peripheral areas (southern), focused on the areas of fragmented family farming. In view of the tradition of intensive commuting, this area particularly needs focusing on the multifunctional development of small towns and major villages which form the local centres of public life, complete with the labour market. The local entrepreneurship should be developed based on the services promoting a rural lifestyle and involvement of the inhabitants in the initiatives related to Polish rural culture.

The relatively low in Poland evaluation of the local community capital, often covered by a pauperisation process, is a characteristic feature of the area of the third type (northern) occurrence. Positively, it is an area which requires direct intervention of the policy of cohesion. The more so, as it is a demographically young area, with unused resources of labour. Against the remaining peripheral areas, this has com-

petitive supremacy in the form of dedicated and commercialised agriculture, based to a considerable degree on hired labour. The low density of the settlement grid fosters spatial exclusion. It is therefore necessary to improve accessibility to communication to regional centres. The diversification of the incomes of the rural population, though apparent to a considerable degree, as it is based on social assistance, increasingly results from the development of the local small businesses. It should also be noted that basically it is related to either agriculture or is created based on endogenous resources (e.g. natural environment values).

Taking the above into consideration, it was accepted that the pursuance of a policy of supporting rural peripheral areas based on a single model may lead to a still more broadening gap between the types distinguished. In consequence, it will lead to a growing distance between the central and peripheral areas. The current policy of cohesion in its regional dimension may perhaps attenuate this trend, however it is not capable of breaking through.

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