

study were social networks comprising a number of people (up to 5 in our case) connected by mutual ties (frequently communicating with each other). The project breaks radically with the model of a society as a cloud of human atoms. The importance of the project is related to the fact that knowledge on societies, accumulated in social sciences, is to a significant degree built upon empirical analyses of individuals, where individuals just as atoms or elements of a simple random sample are independent of each other.

Interviews were held with main respondents (the egos) and all members of their personal networks (the alters). Detailed tests convey clearly that both ego and alter samples are good “miniatures” of the Polish society. The questionnaires contained less than 400 variables, and the average time of completion was 45 minutes for the egos and 41 minutes for the alters. The main study was supplemented with a massive online study, in which everyone could locate themselves on several dimensions of social inequality and, by characterizing their contacts with individuals of different social standing, could determine their membership in a “networked social class.” From May to November 2016 a total of 11,074 online surveys were held.

As the size of personal networks is concerned the research team has documented that 90% of the ego respondents declared having friends (alters) while 10% declared having no friends with whom they “communicate frequently over important problems.” 16% have declared having one such friend, 21% two, 20% three, 11% four, and 21% five. These results suggest that Poles do not differ substantially in this respect from other societies, notably the

most studied American society, and on average report having 2–3 friends they confide in. In different societies there is also a common life-cycle pattern, with long-lasting friendships forged at a young age, while a large share of friends are met in school or in the early stages of one’s occupational career.

Other results suggest that while individuals are independent in their political choices, they – more or less consciously – coordinate their votes. These results are visualized in figures 1, 2.

Political preferences are clearly contingent on social relations, which allows to see them not only in terms of individual attitudes, but also in terms of propagation of opinions. In Polish society, for example, Civic Platform (PO) voters prevail among friends and relatives of those who vote for PO or “Nowoczesna,” while Law and Justice (PiS) voters dominate in social environment of all other voters. We also see that while for some electorates the social closure is relatively high (e.g. KORWiN), for other it is exceptionally low (e.g. Kukiz’15). More results can be found in the book mentioned below.

Further readings

Mach B.W., Manterys A., Sadowski I. (eds). (2018). *Individuals and Their Social Contexts*, Warszawa, Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN.

Institute of Political Studies
ul. Polna 18/20, 00-001 Warszawa
phone: 48 (22) 825 52 21
fax: 48 (22) 825 21 46
e-mail: politic@isppan.waw.pl
www.isppan.waw.pl

Continuity and Change – One Hundred Years of Polish Countryside

M. Halamska | M. Stanny | J. Wilkin | Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development |
Polish Academy of Sciences

The year 2018 marks the centennial of Poland’s independence. This anniversary is a good reason for various institutions and organizations to review what they have achieved during the century. The

PAS Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development made attempt at making a synthetic academic presentation of Polish rural areas and agriculture evolution throughout the century, the evolution



Institute's employees

mechanisms, regularities and effects which have been analysed in a long-term. The one hundred years of politically variable conditions is a fascinating period of reforms and changes observed in all domains of life, of fundamental remodelling of society, culture, education and economy. Rural areas and agriculture have played a significant role in those changes. Let us remember that after regaining independence, approximately three quarters of the Polish inhabitants had income from farm-related sources, while today this proportion has decreased to approximately 10%. At the same time, for the majority of today's rural inhabitants the agricultural sector is neither a work place nor a source of income. Today, rural areas cover 93% of Polish territory and are inhabited by 40% of Poland's population; 100 years ago rural areas were home to 75% of the Polish inhabitants.

Thanks to the interdisciplinary nature of studies conducted at the Institute its researchers can help answer questions, investigate issues or debate topics which are too broad or complex to be tackled by a single discipline or a team of researchers specialized in one specific field only. Hence the

following objectives, which underpin the project: *Continuity and Change. One Hundred Years of Polish Countryside*, should be understood as interdisciplinary analyses which explain given phenomena in a broad context.

The main cognitive objectives include:

- Identification and description of adjustment mechanisms observed in agriculture and rural areas during three historical periods, different in terms of institutional backgrounds and state systems, external conditions and the level of Poland's development;
- Determination of regularities and peculiarities related to the continuity of agricultural and rural socio-economic institutions, institutional changes and the development of institutional balance in the long-term (one century) under the influence of turbulent events in history (restoration of state structures, changes of state borders, war, change of political and economic regime, etc.);
- Research on how and to what extent agriculture (as a social and political force, and as an economic system) has influenced the character of the 2nd Republic of Poland, the communist

Polish People's Republic and the current 3rd Republic. Showing farmers and rural population as active participants as well as instrumentally treated objects of history;

- Examination of causes, mechanisms and results of the changing role of agriculture in economic, social and cultural life of Polish rural areas and Poland as a whole;
- Identification of regularities, trends and results of spatial changes which took place in agriculture and rural areas in Poland within the last century;
- Demonstration of how and to what extent the pre-1918 historical heritage – especially that following the abolition of serfdom – influenced the processes observed in rural areas later in the period under consideration.

The project outcomes will include an extensive monograph as well as an album of archived pictures visualizing the analysed changes, both of which will be published in Polish and English. In order to reach a wider public a shortened and popularized version of the monograph will be published, separately in Polish and in English. Public debates are planned to take place at the end of 2018 and in the first half of 2019. To celebrate the 100th anniversary of regaining independence a number of articles will be published in our *Village and Agriculture* journal. We encourage contributions from all disciplines and practitioners worldwide.



2012, harvest in agricultural enterprise in Kobylnica municipality

The popularization of our research findings serves as a starting point for the discussion on myths and stereotypes, which prevail in public as well as academic discourse, concerning the actual role of agriculture and rural areas in Polish society, economy and culture. There are insufficient studies on the issue in social sciences to gain more in-depth understanding of the transformations in Polish economic, social, and cultural life as well as the present-day issues facing Poland nowadays.

The project carried out by our Institute is highly interdisciplinary as it integrates the results of research in economy, sociology, demography, history, geography, political sciences and other scientific domains. The majority of our researchers have been engaged in the project, along with a number of academics from other scientific institutions. The resulting research and publications are supervised by professors Maria Halamska, Andrzej Rosner, Monika Stanny, and Jerzy Wilkin. The project is financed by the „Dialogue” program of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education as well as by foundations and public institutions dealing with rural and agricultural issues.

Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development
ul. Nowy Świat 72, 00-330 Warszawa
phone: 48 (22) 826 94 36
fax: 48 (22) 657 27 50
e-mail: irwir@irwirpan.waw.pl
www.irwirpan.waw.pl



1939, rural road

NATIONAL DIGITAL ARCHIVES