

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT IN POLAND: CASE STUDY PERSPECTIVES

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1. Introduction

Notwithstanding Poland's accession to European Union (EU) in May 2004, the country still faces major challenges. Unemployment is running at almost twenty per cent (GUS, 2005), only slightly more than half of the working age population are employed (OECD, 2004) and GDP per capita is only 47 per cent of the EU average (Eurostat, 2005). However, these aggregate figures mask considerable regional variation, with voivodship unemployment rates ranging from 15.1 per cent to almost thirty per cent in the middle of 2004 (GUS, 2004) and per capita GDP in the richest region being more than twice that of the poorest (GUS/US, 2004). These differences represent yet another challenge for the EU's ambition for economic and social cohesion at both the inter-state and intra-state levels. Since the Maastricht Treaty, European integration has increasingly focused on regional inequalities, with significant budgetary flows being committed, under the auspices of the Structural Funds, to reducing evident disparities. Within the Union, regional policy is centred on the NUTS 2 regions; geographic areas which correspond to UK counties, the French *départments* and the *regioni* in Italy.¹ In Poland, the corresponding spatial entities are the 16 voivodships that were created by the 1999 local government reform.

Although structural funding in the EU can be traced back to 1958, a major reform was undertaken in 1989 since when more emphasis has been placed on subsidiarity and, as a result, more local level actors have become involved in the design and implementation of development planning. In the Polish context, this means that NUTS 5 communities – gminas – have been brought into the regional policy arena. However, as the Funds themselves accrue primarily to NUTS 2 regions, in the first instance, the gminas not only have to identify their development needs, they also need to convince their voivodship that these are more deserving of funding than others in the same region. In addition, the Structural Funds now receive only slightly more than 35 per cent of EU budget, a figure that is some four percentage points lower than the corresponding allocation in 2000 (EC, 2005), notwithstanding the fact that ten new states, the majority of which are considerably poorer than the previous EU-15, have been accepted as full members.

This paper complements the gmina questionnaire research undertaken on this project (Ingham, Ingham, Herbst and Herbst, 2005) by reporting the findings from three case studies undertaken to provide an in-depth evaluation of how local actors approach the economic development process. The work goes beyond the usual tangible indicators such as unemployment, education, industry mix and infrastructure to also consider the impact that 'softer' factors may have on development. Section 2 outlines the procedure adopted to select the gminas for the case studies. The following three sections then detail the findings for the three local areas. A brief summary and conclusion close the paper.

2. Gmina selection

Introduction

Since 1st January 1999, Poland has had a three tier local government structure: the sixteen regional voivodships, the county level powiats, of which there were 374 in 2004, and the 2,478 community level gminas. This spatial sub-division arose from the pre-accession approximation process that required the disaggregation of the country's territory into units that conform to the EU's NUTS classification. Under this, the voivodships are NUTS 2 level regions, the powiats are NUTS 4 areas and the gminas are NUTS 5 level communities. In addition, there are 44 subregions, each composed

of groups of powiats that constitute the country's NUTS 3 level tier, although these are mainly a statistical artefact.

When selecting the gminas for study attention was restricted to rural areas. However, the Polish definition of what constitutes a rural area is administrative and rather circular; it being 'territory situated outside town administrative boundaries' (MARD, 1998). The definition is applied at the level of the gmina at which three types of unit are defined: pure rural (64.1% of the total), urban localities (12.8%) and mixed urban/rural areas (23.1%). For current purposes, the base from which the cases were selected was restricted to the first group. From these, three local authorities with disparate development paths were selected and the visits to these localities were intended to enhance the knowledge of development problems and opportunities in Poland's rural areas. The work forms a natural complement to the quantitative analyses undertaken during the course of the project. Particular attention was focused on:

- The complex notion of absorptive capacity.
- The role of local actors in proposing and implementing change.
- The nature and accessibility of external assistance for development.
- The instruments employed in enacting reform and the institutions involved in it.

What follows is an overview of specific research problems emerging from these general questions, as well as a discussion of the indicators employed for the selection of the study gminas.

Key research problems

Current discussion of rural development within Poland is focused primarily on the consequences of EU enlargement and the reassessment of existing rural development policy. In particular, debate has focused on two issues; first, the experience of the implementation of the Rural Development Plan 2004-2006 and, second, the assumptions for the National Development Plan 2007-2013, the latter of which has been designed to align Poland's strategy to the programming cycle of the Union. The results of the exercise described here reveal the inter-relationships between the level of development and the capacity of local governments to absorb Structural Funds. With this in mind, the case studies examined the following key issues:

1. Social capital, as reflected by the effectiveness of local leaders, the prevailing formal and informal institutional frameworks and the links between the relevant actors in the pursuit of development-oriented undertakings.
2. The role played by local actors in proposing and implementing change, innovative solutions and capital projects.
3. Local leaders' opinions concerning the proposed strategic rural development tools and solutions.
4. Absorptive capacity and competencies in relation to in accessing EU and other assistance funds.
5. Local development tools and their effectiveness.

Selection criteria

The gminas selected for the case studies were chosen on the basis of development levels and growth and on social capacity criteria. The approach was driven by a desire

to include communities with disparate development paths that also differed in their readiness or ability to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by EU accession. One difficulty with this approach is that two apparently contradictory criteria have to be reconciled. On the one hand, the gminas selected had to be exceptional insofar as they could be regarded as a model of either good or bad adaptation to the local environment. On the other hand, they had to be typical, in the sense that their status could not be explained by external factors, such as proximity to large urban centres, tourist amenities, access to main roads or a border location. The aim was therefore to identify communities that owe their success or failure predominantly to internal processes. Accordingly, gmina selection was based on the following criteria:

- Level of development
- Development barriers
- Economic growth
- Social capital
- Local initiative
- Transferability of prospects, in the sense that non-replicable external factors had evidently exerted a minimal impact.

The indicators

For each of the abovementioned criteria a number of indicators were devised to identify those communities that merited in-depth consideration. Most of them were quantitative, although the final selection was also based on the analysis of qualitative measures. The following table contains a description of all of the indicators attributed to each of the criteria, as well as information concerning measurement and data sources.

Table 1 Description of Indicators

Criterion	Method	Description of indicators applied	Data source
Level of development	Quantitative analyses – compound index	Assessed using a development index devised by Zolkiewski <i>et al.</i> (2004). It comprises more than 32 indicators that characterise the position of gminas over six dimensions (infrastructure endowment, agriculture, enterprise, construction, public amenities and local finance). The results on each dimension were then aggregated using cluster analysis to derive the overall gmina rankings.	GUS Small Area Database (SADB)
Development barriers	Quantitative analyses – compound index	Based on the index of rural development barriers formulated by Rosner (2000). Methodologically, it is based on assumptions that are similar to those of Zolkiewski <i>et al.</i> (<i>op. cit.</i>). The difference is that it focuses on development barriers rather than measures of gmina development status. In consequence, it describes additional dimensions of gmina performance, including demography, settlement network problems, pollution, farming patterns, etc.	GUS SADB, National Agricultural Census
Economic growth	Quantitative analyses	The growth rate over the past 10 years measured as an average of standardised local government revenues from 1994 to 2002.	GUS SADB 1994 - 2001
Social activities, social capital	Quantitative analyses – compound index	A measure of absorptive capacity and the contribution of local actors based on information about the level of residents' participation and their education. A social capital index was developed that was composed of several different measures of social participation and education reflecting different approaches to the notion of participation. The precise variables used were turnout at Parliamentary Elections, the EU accession referendum in 2003 and local elections, as well as the number of community organisations (including typically rural ones) <i>per capita</i> and the proportion of the gmina's residents holding a higher school diploma.	PKW, GUS SADB, REGON
Local initiatives and local authorities' efforts	Qualitative analyses – cross-reference.	In order to identify best practice local initiatives, experts from 3 Polish rural development institutions - the Union of Rural Communes of the Republic of Poland, the Rural Development Forum and the Rural Development Foundation – were asked to nominate 5 gminas which, in their opinion, deserved special attention. Only two gminas were nominated by two or more experts and one of these was included in the list of surveyed gminas.	Experts' nominations
Transferability of prospects	Qualitative analysis of gmina geographic location.	A measure to identify whether or not outstanding gminas derive their success from external factors that encompassed location in the form of proximity to a large urban centre, access to main transport routes and exceptional tourist amenities.	Geographic location of gminas.

Coherence of the indicators

While the majority of indicators were static, the dynamics of gmina development is an equally important element of the analysis. Therefore, both a stationary measure (the level of development) and a dynamic one (the growth rate) were used to select the gminas. This exercise resulted in the following four-way classification of gminas:

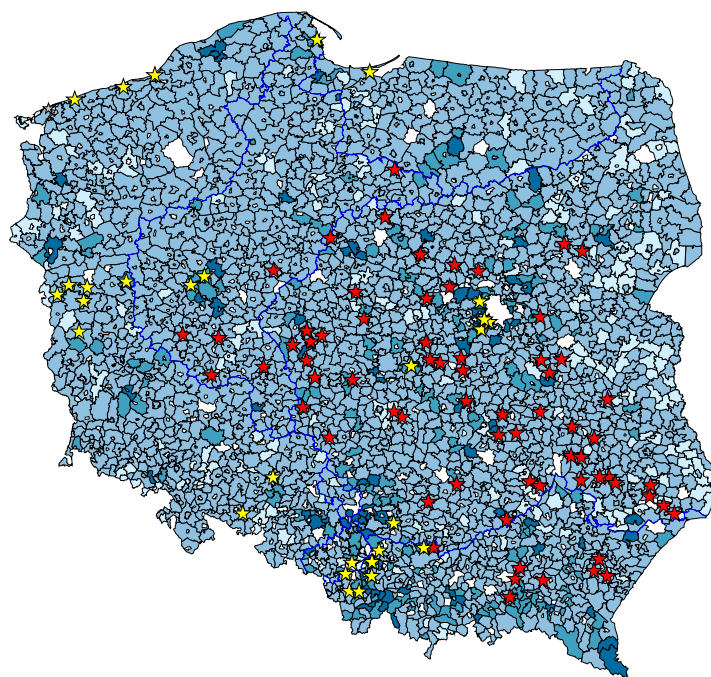
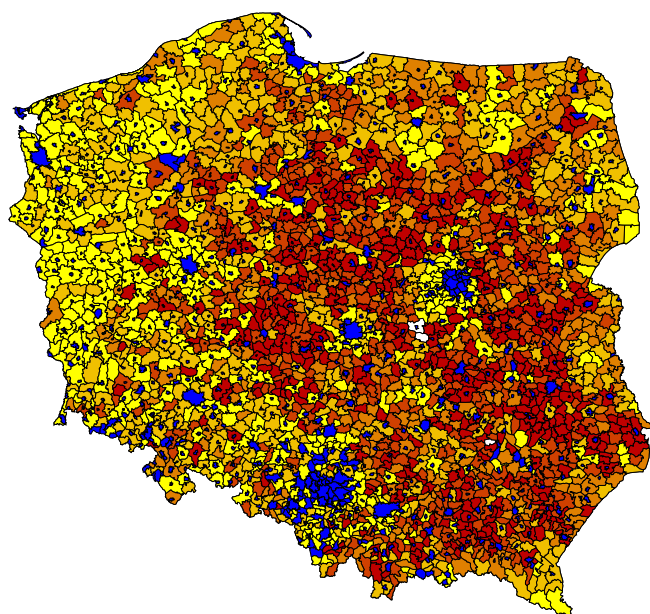
1. Highly developed and fast growing.
2. Poorly developed and slow growing.
3. Poorly developed but fast growing.
4. Highly developed but slow growing.

This typology is depicted in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Gmina typology

Dynamic perspective	Static perspective		
		Low level of development	High level of development
	Slow growth rate	Low level of development and slow growth	High level of development and slow growth
	High growth rate	Low level of development but high growth rate	High level of development and high growth rate

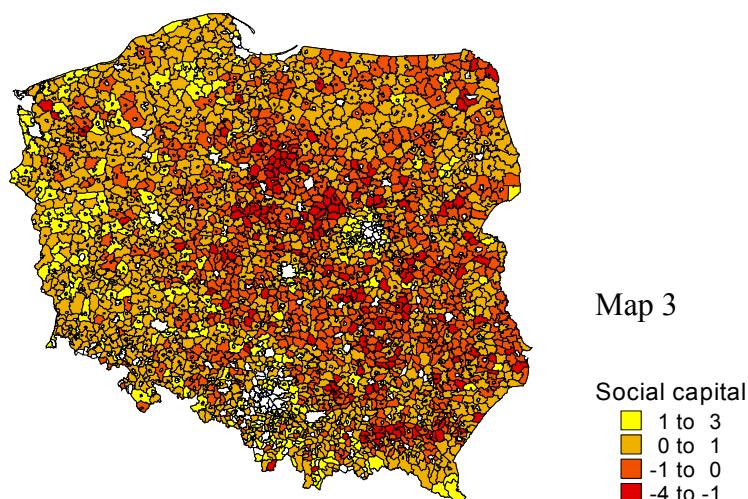
A decision was taken to study one gmina with a high level of development coupled with a high growth rate and a second with a low level of development accompanied by a low growth rate. Turning first to the distribution of economic development, Map 1 illustrates a pattern that shows the highly developed gminas to be located mostly close to urban areas in West Poland, close to borders, close to major transport routes or in possession of highly attractive tourist amenities. The least developed gminas are located mostly (save for minor exceptions) in the area that had been annexed to Russia during the partitions of Poland. The distribution of community growth rates is shown in Map 2. The blue background indicates the growth rates of the gminas, yellow stars denote the top ranking rural communities, while the red stars denote the worst performers.



Dynamics of own gmina incomes 1994-2001, standardised

2 and higher	(85)
1 to 2	(203)
-1 to 1	(1923)
-2,4 to -1	(214)

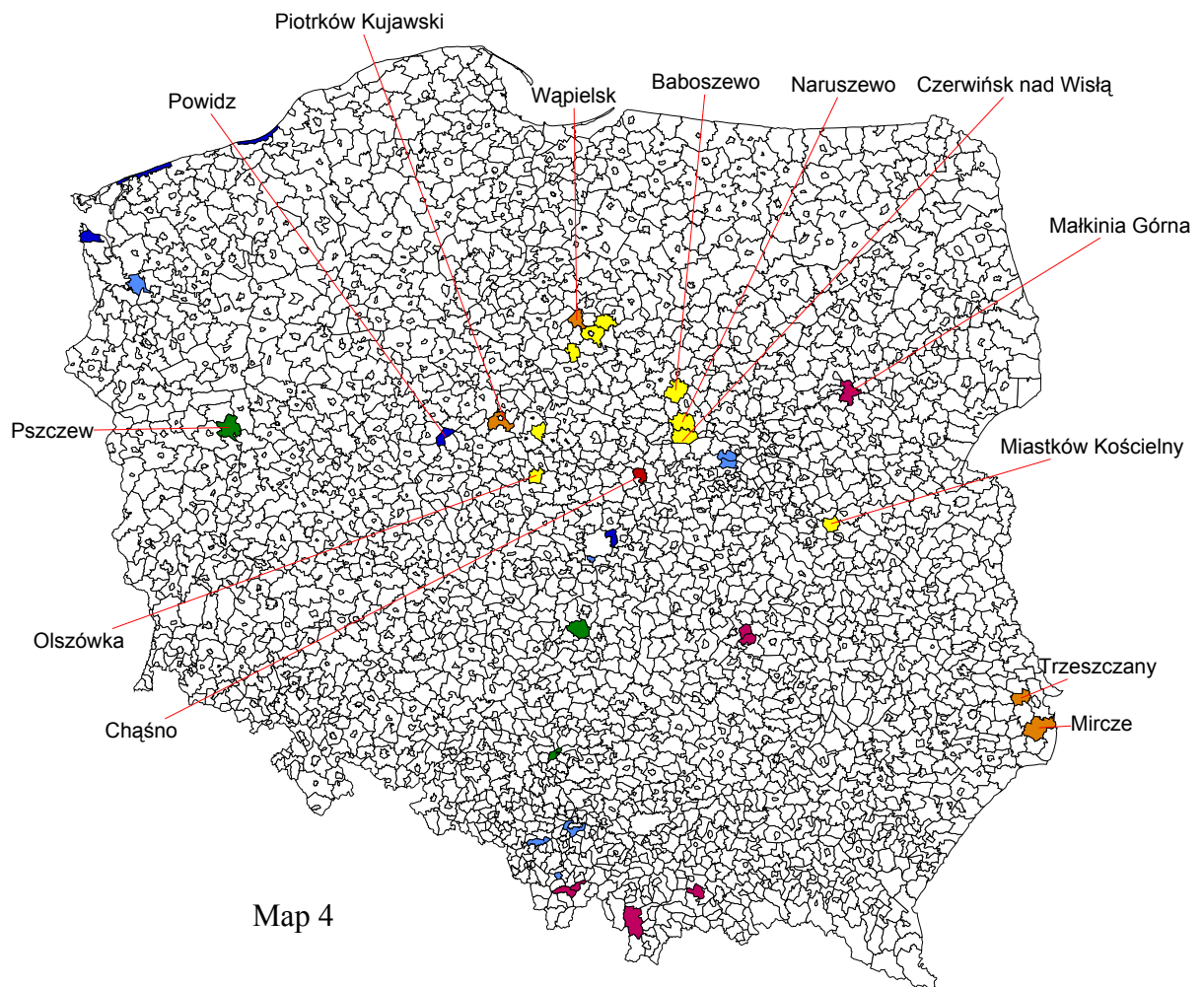
Map 3 highlights the distribution of social capital across Polish space and the pattern is very similar to that for the indicators discussed above. In the Map the three quantitative measures of social capital, which were described in Table 1, are aggregated together to produce an aggregate ranking.



The highest and lowest ranking gminas are shown separately in Map 4 below. Powidz and Pszczew are the only two top ranking gminas in locations other than in the suburbs of large cities or the sea coast. However, closer inspection revealed that neither of these two gminas were suitable candidates for the case studies since both are tourist gminas located in the proximity of lakes and scenic parks. In addition, Powidz is situated near Gniezno, which was the original capital city of Poland. In contrast, identifying the most disadvantaged gminas proved less problematic. Among them, Chaśno, in the voivodship of Mazowieckie, near to Łomża, scored worst on all three indicators. However, this gmina was found to have a number of non-replicable characteristics. First, its agriculture, primarily hog husbandry, is well developed and the rate of unemployment is below the average for the region. In addition, given that Chaśno is situated not far from the capital city and is close to the major Warsaw-Łomża highway it is probable that the gmina is in the commuting belt for these cities. In this respect, the gmina cannot be considered to be a typical rural local authority. As such, the local authority of Wapielsk, located near Golub-Dobrzyń in the voivodship of Kujawsko-Pomorskie, was selected. Even though this gmina possessed superior social capital to Chaśno, its score on this indicator was still far below the average for Poland's rural areas and, in addition, it recorded lower scores on the other criteria.

The quest for a successful gmina began by excluding all those local authorities that performed well, but which possessed specific features which meant that the authority's economic development strategies could not be readily transferred to other gminas. In the case of Łukowa, however, a rural gmina located in the voivodship of Lubelskie, near to the border with Podkarpackie, its excellent performance cannot be explained by any specific characteristics of the area. In terms of economic development and infrastructure endowment, its position is quite favourable, although hardly comparable to the best performing gminas, which tend to be exclusively suburban municipalities and tourist resorts. However, in spite of its remote location, Łukowa was the seventh fastest growing rural gmina in Poland and its growth score was over five times higher than the mean. The social capital indicators for the gmina

yielded partially conflicting evidence inasmuch as it achieved close to average scores on most measures, while its turnout at local elections was higher than that in the average gmina.

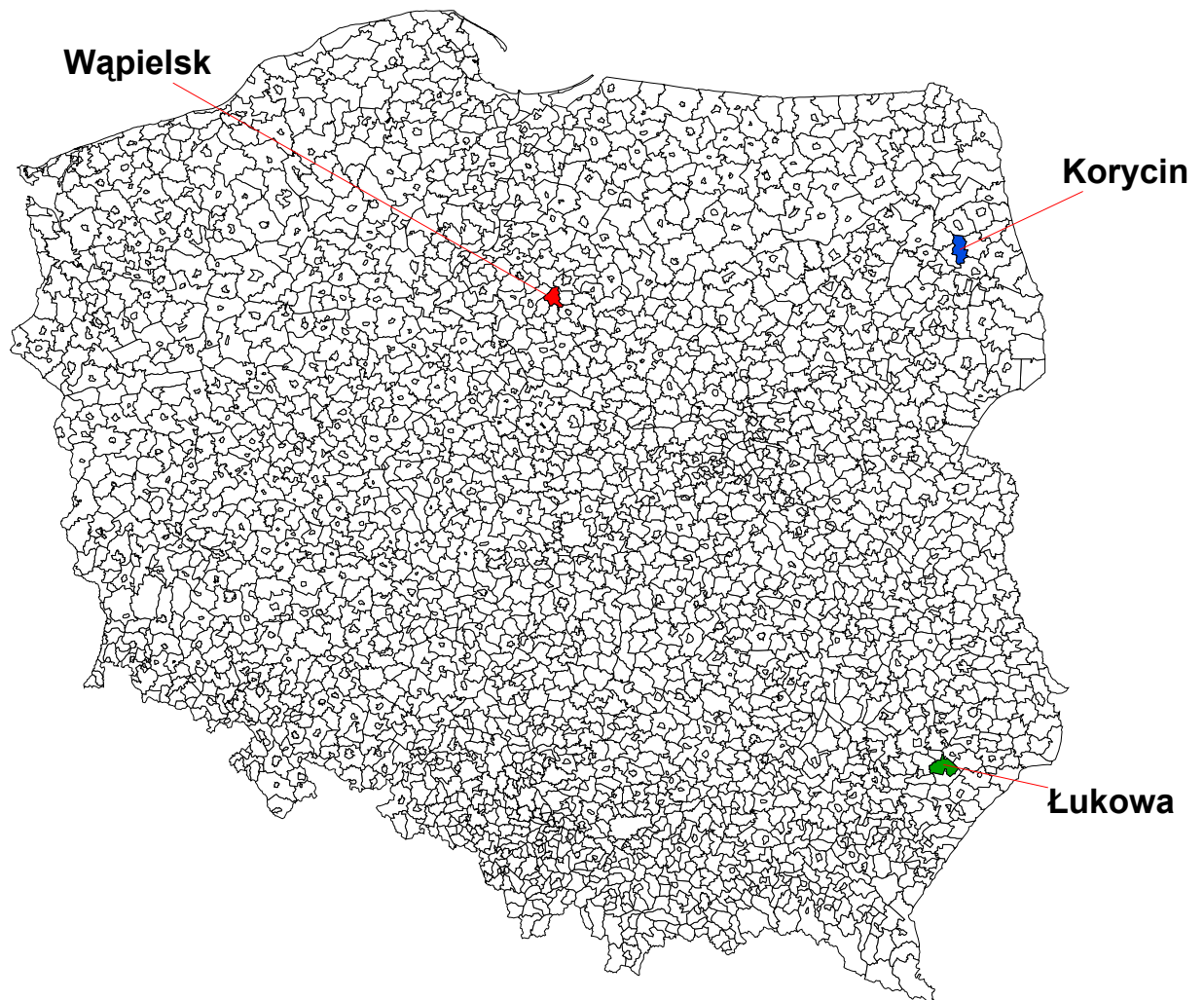


Map 4

- Cases lowest in the hierarchy
- Low development, development problems, low growth & social capital (1)
 - Low development, development problems, low growth (4)
 - Low development, development problems, low social capital (9)
- Cases highest in the hierarchy
- High development, growth & social capital (3)
 - High development & growth (7)
 - High development & social capital (6)
- Other interesting cases
- Contradictory outcomes (7)

The selection procedure described above was supplemented by the views of four external experts representing the Union of Rural Communes of the Republic of Poland, the Rural Development Forum and the Rural Development Foundation. All of these organizations specialize in the local development of Poland's rural areas. They were asked to name five gminas that they considered to be good examples of pro-development practice and local initiative. In the event, their suggestions had little in

common with the results of statistical indicators derived above. Two gminas, Chmielnik and Korycin, were suggested by two or more of the individuals contacted. However, the former of these two gminas was picked by two experts from the same institution, hence Korycin was added to the set of case study gminas. The exact location of these gminas is shown in Map 5 below.



Map 5

Gminas chosen for the SURDAR case studies

- one of the least developed
- one chosen on the basis of the views of experts
- one of the most developed and rapidly growing

3. Case study 1: Łukowa

Introduction

Łukowa is located in the Roztocze upland in the southern section of Biłgorajski Powiat. It is composed of 11 reeve villages, has a surface area of 14,875 hectares and a population of 4,720. The exact date of Łukowa's foundation is unknown due to the lack of historical records, but according to parochial archives the village was founded in the second half of the 14th century. The Parish of Łukowa was established in early 15th century and since the mid-16th century the gmina was owned by Jan Zamoyski. During the partitions of Poland, Łukowa belonged to the Kingdom of Poland and the gmina's residents, along with those from neighbouring localities, took part in the November Uprising of 1831. Since the declaration of independence, the Łukowa local authority has been part of Biłgorajski Powiat. The local authority was headed by a mayor elected by the local constituency, but subject to approval by the powiat. His office was located in the building that now houses the local authority office.

In 1939, the Kraków Army fought with German forces in the area of the Solska Forest. The Second World War severely affected the village since it was occupied on two occasions and the majority of its residents were relocated to Germany as forced labour. In 1943-44, resistance forces defeated and destroyed a checkpoint of German military police located in the same building as the local authority office. Osuchy, a village located in the gmina, houses the battlefield that witnessed the largest combat fought by resistance soldiers during WWII.

Łukowa is a typical rural local authority with a long tradition of growing Virginia tobacco. One thousand and eight farms, with an average surface area of 7.1 hectares, employ eighty per cent of the local workforce, with grain and potatoes being the other main crops. The soils are relatively low grade, being of class III and IV. There are 124 registered businesses operating in the local authority, with the Chmielk-based Black Red White (BRW) company, a furniture manufacturer, being the largest. This company is, in fact, one of the largest enterprises in the entire district and currently it has approximately three hundred employees.

Initial impressions of Łukowa suggested that it was a well developed, affluent area. Most village houses are renovated and plastered, with well kept yards. Notable buildings include the town hall, which dates from the early 20th century, a modern school building, which was built with the financial support of local residents, and a new up-to-date wastewater treatment plant. Nearby, in Chmielk, "houses of glass" are being built along with industrial buildings belonging to BWC and several other associated companies. This modern industrial architecture among the hills is a rare sight in Poland and in 2002 Łukowa was recognised by the Centre of Regional Studies as the best local authority in the entire Lublin region.

Population

In 2004, the population of Łukowa was 4,720. Population density is low – 31 persons per square kilometre, compared with an average of 124 for Poland. The population of Łukowa is, however, growing. In 1999, the adult population of 3,605 displayed the following education structure: 3 per cent held academic degrees, 23 per cent possessed secondary/post secondary education, 30 per cent had basic vocational education, 33 per cent were only educated to the primary level, whilst 11 per cent had not completed primary school. In 1998, average life expectancy in Łukowa was much below both the national and regional averages, with males living on average 60.1 years (Poland's national average was 68.4) and females for 74.1 years (77 being the

corresponding national figure). Unfortunately, comparable data is not available for more recent years.

Infrastructure

The total length of roads within the gmina boundaries is 77 km, which includes 57 km of hard-surfaced roads. As there is no direct rail service available, residents must rely on bus services provided by the PKS Company. Currently, natural gas is not available in Łukowa although, along with neighbouring local authorities, the gmina is scheduled to be connected to a high pressure gas transmission pipeline located in Lubaczów. For the present, however, Łukowa residents heat their houses using coal-fed individual boilers, without any dust collectors. Between 1994 and 1995, Łukowa was equipped with a modern telephone exchange, which had a capacity of 100 lines. By 1999, the residents of Łukowa had 680 telephone lines at their disposal, implying that there were seven people per telephone line. The contemporary situation is not known given that the statistical authorities no longer provide such information; in part, no doubt because of the growth in importance of mobile telephony. The residents used a public water supply system owned by the local authority, a new wastewater treatment plant was built using funding from PHARE STRUDER II and the sewerage system is subject to ongoing upgrading.

The labour market

The majority of the residents work on private farms. There are no large manufacturers other than the BRW company. Only 14.5 per cent of the population hold a job outside the agricultural sector. There were 180 unemployed persons in Łukowa in 2004, which represented four per cent of the total population. Apart from the BRW company, the only institutions that employed more than five workers were the local authority office, the Cooperative Bank, the Farmers' Cooperative, the Local Cultural Centre, the health care centre, schools and the Fames and Stelmach furniture factories.

Agriculture

Farmland accounts for 46.4 per cent of the total surface area in Łukowa. Since 1996, local farms have been fragmented and, consequently, the average farm size has decreased and by 1999 only 31 out of 1035 farms (3%) had suspended or withdrawn from farming operations. There were 197 subsistence farms (19% of the total) and only 22 per cent produced solely for the market. Nevertheless, commercial farms, producing both for own consumption and for the market, accounted for the largest share (59%) of all farms in the area.

Only 18 per cent of the cereals, potatoes, beets and tobacco grown in the area are produced on a commercial basis. Tobacco is the main economic crop with a sowing area of 620 hectares, which represents 16 per cent of the total sowing area. It might be noted that the tobacco yield in Łukowa is almost forty per cent higher than the average for the Lublin region. Just over half 549 of the farms engaged in cattle husbandry and all of these had at least three animals. Some farms practised more than one kind of animal husbandry. The farms in Łukowa are well equipped with cultivating machinery; for example, there are 1.5 tractors per farm. Almost every farm is equipped with a field sprayer, rotary mower, hay drier, grain drill, manure spreader and other cultivating machinery, such as harrows and ploughs.

Social infrastructure

There are three pre-school education establishments in Łukowa, which are attended by 28 per cent of all children of suitable age. In addition, there are three primary schools and a junior high school. The health care centre is equipped with ECG and USG apparatus and it employs two full-time physicians; one a general practitioner, the other a specialist in internal diseases. In addition, a gynaecologist and a dentist are available every week.

Social assistance

Assistance is provided mainly to families with the following problems: unemployment, parental failure, poverty, disability and chronic illness.

Initial assessment

Łukowa is considered to be one of the fastest growing and successful local communities in the entire Lubelskie voivodship and its successes have been praised on several occasions. Łukowa has been granted awards by the Centre of Regional Studies and by *Rzeczpospolita*, which recognised it as the best local authority in the entire Lublin region.² Its rapid growth is evidenced by substantial local authority revenues and a number of infrastructure projects. The gmina's development is a good example of growth occurring in the absence of any obvious and easily accessible resources. Łukowa has a set of opportunities that are typical to many Polish local authorities insofar as its soils are mediocre and the vast majority of farms are small. Furthermore, the landscape is relatively undiversified, with clean air and the Solska Forest being the area's only tourist attractions, there being no spa resort tradition in the area. Łukowa is almost quite distant from Zamość and Lublin, the local centres of development. Access to the gmina is not good as there are no railway lines and the roads are narrow and winding. Furthermore the gmina has no mineral deposits and not a single large company operated there prior to 1989.

When attempting to identify the reasons behind the spectacular success of this local community over the past 15 years, three factors need to be considered. First, there is the business factor, with the gmina authority receiving substantial tax revenues from the prospering BRW company established by a local resident. Until 1999, BRW operated as a sole trader company, which meant that 27 per cent of the personal income tax paid by the owner went to the local budget. This generated as much as three million złoty (PLN) in tax revenue from that one company. Today, BRW is incorporated as a limited liability company, which means that only five per cent of its income accrues to the local authority.

Second, there is the social factor since the Łukowa community displays a wealth of attributes that make it rich in social capital. The community is deeply rooted and since residents have known each other for generations, mutual trust is encouraged. Furthermore, Łukowa has a long tradition of co-operation and self-organisation, with its residents tending to be self-reliant. They follow almost a Protestant work ethic; hard working, thrifty and usually investing any surplus money.

Thirdly, there is the administrative factor insofar as Łukowa largely owes its success to the good management of public affairs by its local officials. Some of its administration abilities have been inherited from the past, with the gmina having been a parochial village and a seat of local authorities since the 15th century. The mayor of Łukowa, Andrzej Kozyra, has been re-elected for three terms of office in recognition of his excellent management skills and the efficiency of his operations. Local authority staff are also active in seeking out new project finance and they complete

applications and prepare bidding documentation without any external support. The spectacular growth of Łukowa local authority would not be possible without the involvement of the residents and their concern for the future of their locality.

Key local actors – councillors, businessmen, farmers, the head of local cultural centre – are actively engaged in the preparation of development strategies for their respective areas of interest. In addition, in order to be able to realise these plans, they are willing to seek funds from sources other than the local budget. Extensive use of assistance funds, which contribute to the public, municipal, corporate or farmers' budgets, has facilitated the rapid development of the local authority. Since the late 1990's, it has been obtaining funds earmarked for infrastructure projects such as a new sewerage system, road development and expansion of the high school. Farmers have purchased new equipment from SAPARD funds and this is a testament to significant foresight among local residents and a good knowledge of project planning issues. Local residents share information about available facilities, loans, etc. and farmers, businessmen and municipal officers have attended training events to enhance their knowledge of various European funds. The use of assistance funds is encouraged by the local authority and it often provides loan guarantees, sets up training events and disseminates relevant information. Arguably, the success of Łukowa arises from the hard work of individual residents combined with decent co-operation at the level of local community.

Key social actors

The Black Red White Company

The BRW company was founded by Mr. Tadeusz Chmiel, a resident of Chmielk. Currently, he is the main shareholder with a ninety per cent holding. This company grew out of a furniture workshop that Chmiel ran in the 1980s. The BRW company itself was founded in 1991 as a furniture manufacturer. As an employee of BRW recalls, the beginnings of the company were quite modest, "I remember him [Tadeusz Chmiel] arriving in his tiny Fiat at the local authority office, which he was fitting with furniture. He was ironing the veneer with a plain iron". In the early 1990's, the company rented a building from the then bankrupt POM (District Farming Machinery Centre). Subsequent purchases now mean that Chmiel controls the whole site.

Today, BRW comprises many establishments, manufacturing plants in Chmielk, Biłgoraj, Dachnów, Mielec and Zamość, almost twenty wholesale warehouses and over one-thousand showrooms and retail outlets throughout Poland. In Chmielk, the company operates under the name "Fames" and employs three hundred workers. The entire corporation employs 716 people and indirectly generates more than three thousand jobs in the sales outlets. The company exports part of its output, mainly to Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Croatia and Germany. It has established warehouses across Poland and co-operates with several dealers who sell its products abroad. In 2003, the holding company BRW SA generated revenues of 974.8 million PLN, 86 million more than in 2002, and generated a net profit of 53.5 million PLN.

BRW also has supplier companies which operate in Łukowa; namely: Convex (a glass manufacture), Transboss (transport) and Witplat (forklift maintenance). The local people appreciate working for BRW. "Protective suits, social bonus every six months, Christmas gift package. And recently the employees were offered a holiday tour in France. Everyone is happy to work for BRW" said the pleased wife of a BRW employee. However, there have been pay cuts that have caused many former BRW employees to return to farming. Nevertheless, the company has furnished all the local

institutions free of charge and it has also provided furniture to the local junior high school. According to mayor's estimates, the equipment is worth approximately one-hundred thousand PLN³. BRW is also providing financial support to the cultural life in the locality. For example, it has financed the construction of a leisure park for children. Notwithstanding the recent, significant cuts in pay, the company is viewed very favourably by local residents who appreciate that Łukowa's development is, at least in part, due to BRW, which is known locally as "the Firm". They believe that the future of Łukowa is intrinsically linked with BRW's operations and that if it were ever to go bankrupt it would threaten the area's future.

The Victoria Sports Club

The popular Victoria sports and athletics club was established in 1977 to promote football competitions and it currently has two teams:

- Victoria I is competing in the second group of the 4th football division, which comprises clubs from the former voivodships of Chełm, Kielce, Tarnobrzeg and Zamość; and:
- Victoria II which competes in the Biłgoraj B Football Class. This is a squad of reserves from the core team and of novices and young boys from Łukowa.

In addition, 40 athletes are registered with the Victoria Club.

The Club is financed from the local authority's budget and by contributions from private sponsors. It owns a large playing field and training is supervised by four volunteer coaches. Also, a priest from Łukowa Parish is organising parochial games and, in 2004, his team of altar boys won the Zamość Diocese Cup. Games for the Mayor's Cup are held every year and the referees are officials from the Regional Football Association.

The Municipal Centre of Culture

The Municipal Centre of Culture was established in 1976 and is located in the centre of Łukowa village. For three years, this Centre has been operating jointly with the Public Library in Łukowa and its branch in Chmielk. The Centre is equipped with professional sound and audiovisual equipment and its auditorium and a club room are available for meetings and events. It employs four trainers who work with children. The Centre's fitness room is equipped with weight-training facilities for young people over 16 years of age.

A Circle of Country Housewives has been established at the Centre to promote local traditional ceremonies and songs and its choir, led by the Centre's head, was, on three consecutive occasions, awarded first prize at the Baszta Competition held in Kazimierz nad Wisłą. Following their initial success, the choir performed on Polish television. The choir focuses on songs from the Łukowa region and all of the songs are collected and recorded by the head of the Centre and their lyrics and music have been published in a book. The Rural Development Foundation supports the collection and publication of these local songs. In addition to the choir, the Circle also contributes to various events such as harvest festivals and patriotic ceremonies. The Centre also runs a music circle at which children learn to play guitar and piano. Art classes are also available at the Centre and it hosts a brass orchestra of eleven players.

The Centre also publishes a local monthly newspaper – *Goniec Łukowej* (Łukowa Messenger) – which has a circulation of 150. This paper publishes articles on the current activities of local authorities, the minutes of the local council meetings and resolutions adopted by the council. It also publishes articles on the history of Łukowa and the December 2004 issue contained an announcement from the district

labour office regarding the availability of EU funds. In addition to the proceeds from sales (one PLN per copy), the publication also receives financial support from the local authority. However, although local residents read the newspaper, they don't regard it as an important source of information or as an opinion former. Instead, direct contact between the residents is most often mentioned as the favoured source of information.

On international children's day, the Centre staff organise a fiesta attended by four thousand people, including all the children from Łukowa and its environs and a special playground is erected. This fiesta is sponsored by the local authority and the BRW company. As well as the Centre, the renovated library is very well furnished. Its manager is conducting campaigns to promote reading that have been quite successful, particularly in view of the high cost of borrowing a book. More than one-quarter of the gmina's residents are library users.

The wójt (mayor)

The wójt of Łukowa, Mr. Andrzej Kozyra, was re-elected for a third consecutive term of office. He conveys the impression of being a professional committed to his obligations. At the last local elections, which were held in 2002, he received over eighty per cent of all votes cast. He is a good manager and the residents recognise his strengths and consider him to be the key local leader. Everybody interviewed appreciated his efforts, referring to him as a good administrator and manager. When asked to evaluate his efforts, all of them replied, "the effects are visible: a sewerage system, pavements, a beautiful school, the low rate of unemployment." There is no opposition to the wójt and the efficiency of the local authority office can be credited to him. In terms of generating funding for gmina improvements, it is local officers who gather information about available monies and prepare the necessary applications. The wójt uses his contacts and focuses on ensuring "a good climate" for the applications; that is, he lobbies decision-makers in order to try to secure funding for his gmina

A Local Councillor

Mr. Jan Pluskwa, who is President of the Local Council, is currently serving his first term of office. The voters appreciate his efforts, both as the organiser of mass protests and as a leader in the 1999 campaign for tobacco subsidies. He is actively fighting for favourable regulatory changes for tobacco growers and is also a member of a number of farmers' associations.

Voluntary Fire Brigades

Four units of Voluntary Fire Brigades (VFBs) operate in the Łukowa local authority: in Łukowa itself, Chmielk, Pisklaki and Osuchy. There are 115 members in these four units and, in addition to their normal duties, they organise discotheques and other events for young people.

The Headmaster

The junior high school headmaster is a very important local actor in terms of educational development in the gmina. He is an excellent manager and makes every efforts to ensure that young residents have equal educational opportunities and return to Łukowa as educated people. According to the headmaster, education is vital to the gmina and he believes that the residents share his view. Those interviewed perceived his work at the school as a mission that he is attempting to accomplish in the best

possible manner. He was the force behind the local Society for the Promotion of Culture and Science that is running an evening high school for adults and a postgraduate school of information technology opened in September 2004. The headmaster is a local patriot with a keen interest in local history and, as a student, he wrote the history of Łukowa. Coincidentally, his wife devoted her Master's Degree dissertation to Paweł Adamiec, a legendary teacher working in Łukowa before WWII; a figure who could be considered to be an excellent role model for all teachers insofar as he was a patriot and an excellent organiser.

The Parish

The Parish of Łukowa is an important local institution that helps to integrate the local community. A choir and the Legion of Holy Mary have been established at the church, the latter, which is associated with Radio Maryja, organises various church ceremonies and regular meetings with young people.

The Bank

The Co-operative Bank of Łukowa is the local financial institution that extends loans to local residents, some of which are guaranteed by the Mayor. A portion of these monies provide co-finance for the EU subsidised purchase of farming machinery. There is also a local bank operating in Łukowa that was originally founded in 1926 but, following the depression, it went bankrupt in 1934 when the local residents withdrew their deposits. It reappeared as the Stefczyk bank in 1939.

The Producers' Group

The Tobacco Producers' Group incorporates three hundred tobacco growers from the local authority and is headed by Mr Grzyb, a tobacco grower. The local strategic plan for the area includes the desire to turn this group into a commercial organization.

The profile of interpersonal relationships

Social ties are very strong in Łukowa. In the past, poverty was widespread in the region and people had to co-operate with each other in order to achieve self-sufficiency. Hard work is a key trait of Łukowa residents and is considered to be a virtue and a measure of the value of people. Łukowa devised a model of "decent man"; one who must work hard, invest and be modern. Local patriotism and the will to strive for the common good are deeply rooted here due to the area's past annexation to Russia and battles it suffered during WWII. Łukowa residents are willing to co-operate with each other and ready to accept responsibility for the future of the entire community. What is more, the interviews conducted did not reveal any serious divisions within the local community. Community spirit is very strong and residents view the success of other individuals or of the BRW company as if it were their own. Łukowa residents are proud of the development of their municipality and strongly identify with the community.

Within the locality it is possible to identify key patterns of social ties. First, the community is homogenous, largely due to the fact that relatively few residents emigrate and, similarly, there are few newcomers. The same families have lived here for generations. Persistent settlement encourages the feeling of ownership and stewardship of the area. The community is also homogenous in terms of ethnicity and religion, even though Jews and Germans were domiciled in the area prior to the war. Homogeneity, coupled with the deep rooting of local residents, mean that all of them know each other well. This, in turn, promotes mutual trust.

Second, the community of Łukowa displays a good deal of social control. Because people have known each other for generations, they watch each other carefully. As the head of Municipal Centre of Culture said, "I have to do my best, work decently, because everyone knows me and they know my husband and my parents". In Łukowa, social control translates into positive rivalry between residents. Who will earn more money? Who owns a nicer looking, better kept garden or a better car? To the individual, social control means that he/she must be decent in addition to being hard working and a good manager. This decency is primarily expressed through piety and all individuals interviewed attend Sunday church services. Furthermore, decency will not condone weakness such as alcohol abuse. There is no bar, coffee shop or restaurant in Łukowa. The only social outlet, which is literally a hole in the wall, is referred to by the locals as a "dive" where "decent" people do not dare to go. Frequenting this place is generally perceived as shameful behaviour and is viewed as tantamount to laziness and wastefulness. The patrons are some of the few local unemployed people and they are generally treated with disrespect. In contrast, decent citizens are just too busy to spend time in such a place, since they spend all their time taking care of their farm.

Thirdly, Łukowa residents have historic experience of joint action since they fought for independence during the November Uprising in 1831, the January Uprising of 1863 and the Second World War. The local cemetery contains the graves of insurgents and resistance soldiers. Osuchy, a village located in the area, was the battlefield of the largest resistance battle during WWII. This ability to undertake a collaborative effort, so often displayed by past generations in their fight for independence, is now proving useful in the struggle to secure the economic future of the community. Łukowa residents have inherited from their ancestors the conviction that one must act in order to change an unfavourable situation. Arguably, a high patriotic conscience – the necessity of the common fight for independence – is derived from the spirit of co-operation. The ability to call together and unite in the fight with enemies is now proving useful in defending the common interests of the community. The ability to co-operate also derives from the recognition of shared interests and mutual trust. This inherited capacity for self-organisation became evident in the late 1990's, when Łukowa residents emerged as leaders of the campaign for subsidies to tobacco growers. Then they were fighting not only for their own cause, but also for the future of their community. This fight was seen as a battle for the survival of numerous families. Had they refrained from this fight in 1999, the rate of unemployment would today be very high in Łukowa. In addition, the residents have demonstrated that they share a common perception of their interests and their future.

Łukowa was the ignition point for the national tobacco strike of 1999. Central government was forced to make concessions and issue a related tobacco subsidy ordinance. The protests were supported by all local authority residents, not just the farmers. The owner of several filling stations recalled that he took the protesting farmers to Warsaw, even though he had no immediate interest in their cause. In this respect, the local community shared responsibility for the future of the entire gmina. Furthermore, the establishment of the tobacco producers' group provides additional evidence that the local community recognizes the benefits of collaborative action.

The local residents feel united in extraordinary situations such as crises and celebrations or when specific action is required, as was the case when the school was built. They are hard working people and tend to mind their own businesses and are, normally, not particularly interested in the decisions made by local authorities. The residents do not attend the meetings of the local council and one councillor noted that

even though meetings are held to inform local residents about planned projects, normally they do not appear.

Fourthly, the residents of Łukowa are very religious. The Church therefore integrates the local community and the religious life of residents is not limited to Sunday services. A choir and the Legion of Holy Mary operate successfully and it seems that Łukowa residents are faithful to the tenets of the Catholic faith.

Fifthly, the work ethos is very strong at Łukowa. Those interviewed believed that the success of their local authority is attributable to the hard work of the residents. In fact, work is omnipresent in the day to day lives of Łukowa residents. Running a farm, especially one producing tobacco, requires constant year-round monitoring of the plantation, without a winter break. As the residents are minded to save and as farmhands are relatively expensive, they have to work on their own or rely on other family members. Many of those employed outside agriculture also run farms and, after working a full day, they become “farmers after hours” at home. Most children, even those of affluent farmers, spend their vacations at home helping their parents. Children are hired to help at harvesting and in this way they are taught to consider work to be a personal obligation of the highest value.

In addition to their hard work, the residents of Łukowa exhibit a propensity for savings rather than for consumption. The most affluent of the farmers, Mr. Kuszka, was interviewed in his home. The house itself is very modest but the outbuildings contain state of the art tobacco processing equipment, which was partially financed under the SAPARD programme. In general, farmers in the area do invest in new, technologically advanced agricultural machinery and Łukowa was among the first Polish localities to invest in modern tobacco leaf driers. As Kuszka said, “the local people use the latest technologies. They just have it in their blood”. Quite possibly, the past has contributed to this attitude since, before the war, a farmers’ circle was established in Łukowa to promote innovative farming techniques and to fight backwardness. In particular, farmers were encouraged to use artificial fertilizers.

The sixth important factor is Łukowa’s long and continuous tradition of local governance. Since the 15th century it has been the seat of local government, in spite of the changes in administrative divisions.

Nevertheless the nature of local socializing, which is strictly organised, could be a cause for concern. People mostly meet each other at meetings of the local associations, such as choir performances, events organised by the Volunteer Fire Brigades or the Legion of Holy Mary, etc. Social events, such as discotheques, are held quite often, but they only attract the younger residents. As noted above, the local authority lacks a venue where people can meet each other. There is no coffee shop or bar, so people can only fraternise with their neighbours at home. However, those interviewed stressed that such visits are increasingly rare. People work very hard, they have no time and they just don’t feel like socializing. One of the females interviewed, whose views were not typical, claimed that as recently as five years ago people were different and helped each other. Now, as they grow richer, they have begun to envy each other. In consequence, people have ceased to visit each other and divisions have developed within the community.

This pattern of social life observed is not, however, unusual. Nowadays individuals have easy access to entertainment offered by media, computer games, household appliances and other inventions that help to save time. This means that people tend to spend more time at home and don’t ask their neighbours any more for help with menial jobs. Furthermore, the hard work involved in tobacco growing and processing means that people do not have time for socializing.

Finally, there is the sense of local identity, insofar as the residents of Łukowa strongly relate to their local authority and the history of their villages. They are very proud of their achievements and fighting history. This feeling of identity is strengthened by various local ceremonies and the local authority organises a number of patriotic events that receive considerable support from the entire community. The anniversary of the aforementioned Osuchy Battle is the most important occasion and the celebrations are held in grand style, with officials being invited from the region and Warsaw to emphasise the importance of the event. The local residents are very proud of these celebrations and frequently cite them when questioned about events promoted by the local authority. Additionally, local identity is strengthened by the efforts of individual social actors, such as the headmaster who named his school after an outstanding local teacher and the Head of Municipal Centre of Culture who devotes considerable effort to preserving local folklore.

The European Union

The residents of Łukowa are not enthusiastic about the EU. Thus, in the referendum, the turnout was less than fifty per cent, with 838 voting against accession and 818 voting for it. One journalist from a Biłgoraj newspaper conjectured that explained that Łukowa residents are already doing so well that they just do not need the EU. This is in spite of the fact that, according to the wójt, ninety per cent of entitled farmers receive direct payments from the CAP and Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture (ARMA) staff and local authority officers have assisted them with the necessary paperwork. In addition, the local authority itself is actively and successfully seeking external funding from *inter alia* the EU. In 2001, Łukowa was granted 1 million PLN from PHARE's Socio-Economic Cohesion Fund for a sewerage project. Other grants that the authority has secured include:

- FOGR: 70,000 PLN for the construction of a local road (2002).
- Voivodship Contract, 201,495 PLN for the construction of a local road (2002).
- FOGR: 206,672 PLN for the construction of a local road (2003).
- SAPARD: 704,936 PLN for the improvement of a local road (2003).
- PHARE: 971,646 PLN for the construction of a sanitary sewer (2003/04).
- SAPARD: 646,520 PLN for the construction of a sanitary sewer (2004/05).
- SAPARD: 406,418 PLN for the construction of a sanitary sewer (2004/05).
- Voivodship Contract: 148,526 PLN for the improvement of a local road (2004).

So far, the wójt has attempted to obtain any available external funding that he is aware of. As noted above, the applications are prepared by the local authority officers. These individuals tend to come from the capital investment department, since most of the funds are for infrastructure projects. Once the applications are submitted, the wójt pursues active lobbying in accordance with his belief that without this the projects have only a very limited chance of being approved. Therefore, positive information concerning the projects needs to be transmitted to the relevant decision-makers. It is the responsibility of the local officials to seek out information about current tenders and competitions in the professional press. Additional information channels that they use to find out about funding opportunities include Members of Parliament and local government officers working in the Marshall's Office.

Local development

The local development strategy for Łukowa was prepared in 2000 and the documented was drafted by local officials and experts from the Lublin-based *Centre for the Integration of Rural Areas with the European Union*. In December 2004, the local council adopted the plan along with the associated capital plan for the years 2004–06 and 2007–13 respectively.⁴ The strategy is based on the assumption that the future of the community will depend primarily on professionalizing agriculture, the creation of non-farming jobs and the development of infrastructure facilities. The achievement of these three objectives is expected to ensure decent living conditions for the gmina's population who, in turn, will stay in the area and enjoy good living conditions. This vision is often referred to as 'multi-functional rural development'. In order to achieve these priority objectives, the development strategy identifies a number of strategic goals.

The expansion of physical infrastructure

This is regarded as a precondition for subsequent projects and a measure intended to improve the quality of life. The strategy calls for the following projects: the development of a wastewater treatment plant, the construction of sanitary sewers, a gas distribution system, continued construction and the upgrading of local roads.

Organic farming

It is intended that the development of agriculture in Łukowa should focus on organic farming, rather than on intensive production. This will involve assistance to new producers' groups and farmers' organisations, the development of produce storage centres and processing plants. Basically, these goals are consistent with the structure of local farms, the small size of which is perceived as a potential strength. However, in order for organic farming to be successful, the processing system is vital.

SMEs

The development of the SME sector is expected to facilitate the diversification of farming. The local authority has identified the impediments to the development of the sector as being, "restrained access to capital and enterprise development services, underdeveloped infrastructure and a lack of local initiatives." The strategy does not, however, contain any concrete ideas apart from those relating to infrastructure and is limited to general statements such as "to promote undertakings that will enable farmers to generate revenues from sources other than agriculture". Nevertheless, the strategy does go on to mention "an increase in farmers' income, overcoming residents' mental barriers associated with business initiatives, and setting up marketing and management training events".

Unemployment

Fighting unemployment is another strategic goal. It seems, however, that this issue has been included in the strategy largely because of the fact that nationally the prevailing opinion is that unemployment is one of the most pressing social problems. In this regard, the unemployment in Łukowa was only 2.8 per cent at the time the strategy was drawn up. Indeed, the issue was not treated in detail precisely because the authors were not convinced of its importance. As such, the document does not contain any concrete measures to fight unemployment and it concentrates instead more on unemployment prevention. Consequently, the strategy envisages "measures

to facilitate creation of new jobs by existing employers and to prevent unemployment among school graduates”.

Health

The need to improve the health of residents has been included in the strategy in order to reflect the fact that they have lower life expectancies than the average Pole. This explains why the document espouses the need “to ensure unrestrained access to health benefits and promote healthy lifestyles”.

Tourism

Tourism and agro-tourism are perceived as local development opportunities and the strategy recognizes that the gmina is a prospective tourist area, mainly because of the absence of any industry, the vastness of the Solska Forest and its clean air. The authorities are at the stage of “defining the local authority’s tourist prospects, carrying out marketing research to identify target tourist market segments” in order to proceed with the development of the necessary tourist infrastructure. However, no capital investments are planned in this area. The consequences are obvious, given that there are currently no hotels or agro-tourism farms in the area.

Investment

In order to ensure an inflow of capital, which is considered to be a growth factor, the authorities intend to focus on the promotion of the gmina. Some concrete measures are envisaged “to promote Łukowa with publications, exhibitions, events, etc., to collect and distribute information on the diversification of local business activities by trade organisations, associations and media, to encourage collective initiatives aimed at diversification of local business activities by providing support to marketing research, promotion of local products, participation in fairs, publishing promotional materials, etc.”.

The local development plan contains more detailed proposals and indicates local development directions consistent with both the strategy and with the planning and zoning regulations. It also identifies the capital investment priorities of the local authority. They are primarily intended to encourage enterprise development through measures such as the provision of services to sites zoned as SME development areas, establishing a rural enterprise incubator and the development of an IT network. The next group of projects is associated with the planned development of tourism and involves the establishment of a convenient tourist base using the local tourist amenities, ensuring sanitary conditions necessary for the development of a catering/accommodation agro-tourism network alongside the creation of good recreation and leisure conditions. In addition, the plan envisages projects intended to improve the quality of living, such as the development of computer networks, extending the network of local roads and completing the sewerage system. There is also mention of ensuring equal educational opportunities for children and young people living in rural areas.

The list of projects to be implemented in the years 2004–06 and 2007–13 has been prepared and the projects have been ranked and prioritized. At the same time, the financial plan for 2004–13 contains the relevant information concerning planned local revenues, expenditures and related sources of funds. The local development plan is accompanied by related implementation, supervision and co-ordination procedures. A special team of officers has been appointed, which is responsible for project finance

and the supervision of project implementation. This team will, in turn, be overseen by the Secretary of the local authority.

Public consultations are to be conducted by the Volunteer Monitoring Commission although, at present, both the composition of the Commission and its operating procedures are still unclear. Łukowa's residents generally agree with the development priorities foreseen by the strategy. A majority of those interviewed see that the future of Łukowa depends upon the further development of agriculture, in particular tobacco growing, and on jobs created by new businesses. They are optimistic about their future and do not express any concerns. They hope their situation will not change and they also generally agree that their local authority is more affluent than both their neighbours and other Polish localities.

Łukowa residents display strong individual responsibility for the well-being and development of their local authority. Key persons attempt to identify and take advantage of available opportunities in their respective sectors. Entrepreneurs improve, often informally, their knowledge and skills and they attend various courses in order to be able to take advantage of any structural assistance available to them. Councillor Peć, the owner of several filling stations, is their informal leader. Mr. Peć is kept informed of available assistance funds as a member of Association of Independent Filling Station Operators. He personally has already obtained money to finance filling station upgrade projects, including the purchase of machinery.

The head of Municipal Centre of Culture, who is determined to preserve the local folklore, is not waiting for funds from the local budget. Instead, she is actively seeking external funding, including that under the auspices of the Rural Development Foundation. In a similar fashion, the school headmaster's wife, herself a teacher, decided to establish a good school library and elicited parental help to furnish the library, whilst she herself is collecting books for it.

In the agriculture sector, local farmers apply for farming machinery grants as well as for direct payments. They strive to improve their knowledge and read the industry press to learn about what is available to them. The local bank is extending loans to farmers who have local authority guarantees at their disposal.

Summary

The evidence uncovered for this case study identifies a number of reasons why Łukowa appears to be a successful gmina. First, there are powerful local actors, of whom the wójt and the owner of the BWR company are the most obvious examples, who seem committed to the development of the community. Second, the wójt appears to be supported by competent local officials. Third, the low level of migration has left the gmina with a homogeneous population whose families have known each other for generations. This has engendered mutual trust amongst the residents and generated social capital. Fourth, the gmina has a local plan, which reflects the wishes of the local population.

However, there are some cautionary factors which might suggest that Łukowa may find it difficult to remain a success story. Thus, it could be argued that the locality is too dependent on the BWR company and that it should seek a more diversified employment base. It is worrying to note that following wage reductions in this company some individuals returned to farming, which is the reverse of the dynamic that should obtain in a modernising local economy. Furthermore, the gmina's strategy envisages that the area will remain heavily dependent on agriculture. Given that Łukowa is a major tobacco growing and processing area, problems may surface if

the Polish government is forced by the EU to either reduce, or indeed to remove, tobacco subsidies or to increase the country's very low tax levy on tobacco.

Furthermore, whilst the lack of social amenities such as bars and restaurants was obviously accepted by the older generation, the *status quo* might prove to be unacceptable to the young, particularly those with higher incomes. High outward migration of this age group would leave the gmina with an ageing population. In a similar vein, the gmina's desire to promote itself as a tourist location will surely be hampered by the lack of such amenities. A further potential threat, as remarked by one interviewee, is that the mutual trust that has underpinned Łukowa's success may be eroding as divisions arise over the widening income distribution. Notwithstanding the ambitious local economic development strategy, ultimately the continued success of the gmina is likely to depend upon the local authority's ability to deliver the necessary investments required to foster investment and diversification.

4. Case study 2: Wapielsk

Wapielsk is the place in the middle of nowhere, it is never on the way, it is remote to any major place, it is such "a hole" (Quoted by a priest).

Background

Wapielsk is located in the eastern part of the voivodship of Kujawsko-Pomorskie in the powiat of Rypin. Although it is located away from the major highways, it is connected to the cities of Golub-Dobrzyn, Rypin and Brodnica through a network of local roads. From these, Warsaw, Torun and Olsztyn can be reached via national highways. Life in Wapielsk is centred on one main crossroad near to which the local courthouse, the fire brigade, the shop, the milk collection terminal and the post office are situated. The local hospital is to be found close by and the gmina also has a nice, though somewhat dilapidated, small old palace. The roads at this crossing actually lead to nowhere and only some random houses and farms can be seen. To its few visitors, Wapielsk must appear to be desolate and empty, with the additional feeling of a place which has been forgotten by everyone, particularly in the winter.

Wapielsk borders the gminas of Rypin and Brzuze (in the powiat of Rypin), Radomin and Golub-Dobrzyń (Golubsko-Dobrzyński powiat), as well as Bobrowe, Brodnica and Osiek (Brodnicy powiat). The natural borders of the gmina are shaped by the river Drwęca and the Długie lake. The total area of the gmina is 9,378 hectares, of which 6,679 hectares is arable land (70.9%) and 1,869 hectares (19.9%) is forests/forest soil. Wapielsk is one of the smallest gminas in the voivodship and only houses 4,359 residents. It is divided into 16 sołectwas – small settlements governed by a village headman. Its has a population density of 46.4 people per square kilometre.

According to the Central Statistical Office figures, the gmina started to systematically lose its inhabitants after 1998. This population trend was also evident in other gminas in the powiat. The main cause of the population reduction was positive net out-migration. The ratio of reproductive age females (20-39) to males of the same age within the gmina was 0.83 in 2002, which compares with an average for the Kujawsko-Pomorskie voivodship of 0.99.

The natural environment

One of the major assets of Wąpielsk is its natural environment, notwithstanding the fact that it is virtually unused by locals. Several natural resources are even listed in the gmina's development strategy, these being clean air, numerous woods, lakes, rivers, water resources, ore deposits and high-quality soils. The area therefore has good tourist potential and its two nature reserves are of special importance. The first, which was established in 1961, is the Drwęca river area. Not only is this a good tourist attraction, it is also a unique reserve for the spawning of rare fishes such as salmon, trout, bull trout and as white fish. Peculiar to this stretch of water is the river lamprey, which is an amphibian living in the sea but which spawns in the Drwęca river and its tributaries. The second nature reserve, Tomkowo, was created in 1965 and is a beautiful national park with a diverse collection of trees, including 66 larches. Also the bend of the Rypienica river is popular for kayaking. Additional tourist attractions in the gmina are the Długie and Kiełpiny lakes.

In Wąpielsk, woodland occupies 1,869 hectares, which is equivalent to twenty per cent of the gmina's total territory. The forests are mainly located in the north, in the lowland and around the river Drwęca. There are both living and dead woodlands of spruces and beeches and the territory is rich in subterranean waters. The Drwęca and Rypienica rivers demarcate the north, north-western and north-eastern borders of the gmina. Also the bend of the Rypienica river is popular for kayaking. Additional tourist attractions in the gmina are the Długie and Kiełpiny lakes.

It appears that the wonderful landscapes and historical sites are under-exploited assets that are neglected and almost never used by the locals. From a visitor's perspective, one major obstacle is the dearth of tourist accommodation, since the gmina has only one agro-tourist establishment. Attractive tourist sites on the shores of the Długie and Kiełpina lakes have no recreational and tourist infrastructure at all. Unfortunately, within the gmina there are no plans to remedy this situation, notwithstanding the fact that the empty palace could potentially provide a partial solution.

The soils in Wąpielsk have quite a high agricultural value and the territory also has rich deposits of natural aggregates – sands and gravel from its rivers. There are six layers of aggregate ores amounting to seven million tons. There are also two deposits of lake chalk in the villages of Rusztowo and Półwieska Duży, although their eventual usage will depend upon the cost efficiency of their extraction.

The economic situation

According to the REGON register, there are 166 registered business entities in Wąpielsk, although 89.8 per cent of these companies were commercial enterprises established by natural persons. Trade and repair businesses dominate, with 31.9 per cent of the total, followed by construction (13.3%) and manufacturing (9.6%). The largest employers are the quarry in Radziki Duże and the local bakery. The quarry belongs to the Kamal company and employs between 30 and 35 people. The remaining enterprises are small service companies in trade and agricultural services and comprise three shops, a bakery, one agro-tourist company and one pub.

Wąpielsk is a typically agricultural community. In the opinion of the wójt, "Wąpielsk, due to its location and natural environment, is doomed to do agriculture". Small farms of less than ten hectares dominate, while the average farm has an area of 10.8 hectares of land, which compares with the national average of seven hectares. According to 2002 General Agricultural Census, there were 529 individual farms in the gmina. Agriculture is the main income source for the majority of Wąpielsk's

residents, with only about 350 people working in other sectors of the economy. However there is the possibility of some seasonal employment in the cold-storage warehouse in the neighbouring gmina of Osiek.

The labour surplus in the gmina is vividly reflected in high unemployment figures. In September 2004 there were 5609 unemployed persons in the powiat which corresponded to an unemployment rate of 29 per cent and is to be compared with the national figure of 18.9 per cent (GUS, 2005a). The structure of unemployment in the gmina is similar to that pertaining in other rural gminas in the region and mainly consists of the young and poorly educated. In 1988, 215 people worked in state agriculture and the gmina has two post-collectivization settlements whose inhabitants rely mainly on social aid. Unemployment is clearly a local concern: one of the interviewees noted, “[the residents] are having a hard life, unemployment is high, people are forced to work during their vacations and can earn no more than 300 PLN per month, doing any work possible”. It is also evident that the residents feel nostalgic about the communist regime which gave them collective farming, financial security and stability in their daily lives. As one resident stated, “before 1989 living standards were much better, we had collectivised farms, money and many people had jobs; for example, the head of one collectivised farm used to employ one hundred persons, now he employs only two. Besides, there was also free distribution of basic commodities such as milk, vegetables and the thirteenth salary”⁵. One more indicator of the economic situation of residents of the gmina is provided by the growth in the numbers drawing social aid over recent years and which now amounts to around twenty per cent of the population.

When speaking about the changes that have occurred in the village since 1989, the most obvious and aggravating for the residents are the escalation of unemployment, the elimination of workplaces and the degradation, as the residents put it, of their living standards. “Speaking about work, the situation is tough now, because with the old system all had their work” (conversation with local Rural Housewives Circle members). On the other hand, in the opinion of the local School Principal, “people now have more influence over the things happening in their community”.

Most localities in Wąpielsk have a central water-supply system and there are two sewage treatment facilities in the gmina: mechanical/biological communal waterworks in Wąpielsk and Ruszków, the latter of which serves households and the agricultural company. Waste processing relies on the communal dumping ground, which became operational in 1992, and occupies 1.95 hectares in Radziki Duże. To date, six thousand cubic meters of waste have been dumped on an area of 0.26 hectares and the site is scheduled to remain in use until 2017.

Social infrastructure

Basic medical aid and health services in the gmina are provided by the medical centre in Wąpielsk. Four primary schools operate in the gmina, in the districts of Długie, Półwiesk, Radziki Duże and Wąpielsk and, in addition, there is one secondary school (gymnasium) in Radziki Duże. There is no post-secondary school within the gmina’s territory, although places are available in the nearby towns of Golub-Dobrzyn, Rypin and Brodnica. Wąpielsk has three libraries, which also offer internet access to residents.

Social and institutional actors and local networks

In Wapielsk there is a dearth of public figures and social institutions able to undertake the actions that would be necessary to generate benefits for the local community. In particular, there is a lack of local leaders to initiate actions, activate residents and instil in them common aims that would serve the interests of the gmina.

The gmina authorities

The wójt of the gmina is in his third term of office, although he does not live in Wapielsk. Previously he was the mayor of Golub-Dobrzyn, the area where he was born and where he still resides. The administration of the gmina does not seem to be very creative in its efforts to improve the well-being of the residents, as illustrated by a statement of the wójt himself, “I have been the wójt for the last nine years, and during this time I haven’t noticed any major progress in the gmina”. There is also a view that the situation has worsened “[the gmina] is not able to do much it does not have much to say, no power earlier, that was real power...” (gmina Secretary).

After talking to representatives from the public administration, it becomes obvious that the administration itself does not believe in its ability to instigate change and, furthermore, it refuses to take full responsibility for the fortunes of the gmina. The officials show no initiative regarding actions to foster development or to improve the living standards of residents. The local authority does not seem to possess the skills necessary for good management and it is unlikely that it will be able to ensure that the gmina achieves its full potential.

It is interesting that the residents, with a few exceptions, do not express critical opinions about their local government. They are entrusting their hopes for the future to the wójt and his administration, yet their attitude to the authorities appears somewhat vague. Thus, although they believe that their local authority might make things better and provide assistance if required, it was also remarked that “[the administration] is merciful, they do what they can, though they can’t do much” (women from the Gmina Social Security Centre). When people do complain, they don’t blame the local authorities, but the unfavourable conditions or external factors, which do not depend upon activity of the local officials.

Nevertheless, the administration is highly committed to co-operating with the Voluntary Fire Brigades (VFBs) and the Rural Housewives Circle, as well as to organizing the Harvest Festivals in the village. There are four fire units in Wapielsk, three of which belong to the National Rescue System. It is clear that both of these groups of organizations are held in high esteem by the wójt, who remarked “these are people who have been involved with such social activity for very long time. It is also nice to collaborate with the Circle as it was reactivated after many years of non-existence”. The wójt does, in fact, declare his willingness to collaborate with any potential partner for the benefit of his community. As examples, he points to the case of local teachers and the priest for whom he organised a parking place by the church. In addition, he organises meetings on Christmas Eve for homeless people.

The teachers themselves seem much more sceptical when describing their relationship with local officials and are dissatisfied with the collaboration. In their opinion, the gmina authorities do not interact to their best ability with school personnel: “the administration sort of competes with the initiatives arising from schools” (Mrs. Świtalska). Teachers also complain about the lack of openness of the authorities over school issues, their lack of interest in school projects and their low commitment to co-operation. According to one secondary school Principal, “these officials have no interest in schools whatsoever, even if their children learn here.

Really there is so little interest in what the young people do and say” and: “I can’t say there’s much enthusiasm from gmina officials about what we are doing”.

The Church

The church, usually a key element in social activity, has a low profile in the life of the community. According to the residents, it is not an institution that has strong influence, either over the people or over the governing bodies. One possible reason for this is that there are five parishes in the gmina, but only one of them – in Radziki Duże – is located entirely within the gmina’s territory. This has a number of consequences. First, there is no common congregation amongst gmina residents and hence there is a lack of social unity between them. The residents do not take part in the same celebrations and gatherings, so the church does not create a social environment within which people meet regularly and which might engender joint actions for the community. As a result, the absence of cohesive gmina church and associated organizations, such as parish groups like Oasis and the Family of Families, the choir and various charitable missions do not create the chance to cement the unity of the community. Second, the residents do not have the possibility to participate in the same church organisations, even though the number of such bodies is actually very small. It is therefore difficult to identify any integrative function of the church and it does not bring residents together in joint projects such as the care for church buildings and associated environments and initiatives to enhance the development of the community. In short, the church does not create a feeling of togetherness and unity among the residents.

The business environment

There is not a single industrial processing enterprise or food-processing centre in Wapielsk. Also, there is neither a bank or any other business organization. The largest business in the area is the quarry belonging to the Kamal Company and this only employs between 30 and 35 persons. The remaining companies are small service organizations. In the opinion of the wójt, “we don’t have entrepreneurs here because there is little to do in Wapielsk and for only God knows whom”. Because of the small number of business entities, and the fact that they are predominately agriculture based, there is no tangible business environment in the gmina. Businessmen in Wapielsk do not create a vibrant and unified environment and they are not organized and so cannot speak to the administration from a common platform.

There is no spirit of private initiative evident nor is there an environment favourable for individual economical activity. Public opinion does not promote the development of entrepreneurship. Only a few act in accordance with the credo that “the way you think, the way you are” (a local businessman). In the opinion of the gmina’s only agro-tourism establishment, the majority “only complain instead of sitting and thinking together what to do and how, they all sit and wait expecting that the work will come to them”. The reality and atmosphere in Wapielsk is well illustrated by the words “there are so few self-made men here. If you get a good job or a stable income you are considered by others to be unkind and arrogant, a view in line with the belief that anyone getting ahead must be a bad person. Everybody is supposed to have just as much as the others” (another local businessman).

Those interviewed referred to the climate in the community as “the Polish hell”. The farmers with whom the interviewers stayed were trying to run an agro-tourist company, but they faced not only underestimation of their hard work and their entrepreneurial efforts, something which itself is quite extraordinary in this area, they

also experienced animosity from their neighbours. They complained that the local people were not happy that they had achieved something and they also feared how their new business idea would be judged by other residents and gmina officials. As the Secretary of the gmina said, there are “no traditions of such activity” in Wapielsk, so the agro-tourism initiative is viewed with suspicion. This example shows that entrepreneurship, defined as the readiness to bear risk and undertake innovative actions, are not values that are present in the community and they are not appreciated by the residents of Wapielsk. “People are not used to such work so they must get adjusted to it and be convinced by it. Then, perhaps, it will come after some time” (gmina Secretary).

The school community

It is logical to consider the school community as a potentially valuable local social actor. Indeed, certain teachers, pupils and, to a lesser extent, some parents are very involved in the life of the gmina. In particular, they have run a number of educational programs for local young people such as “The Footprint of the Past”, “Young Citizens Act”, “School and Class” and “Young People Vote”. In a similar vein, a local teacher remarked that such school projects make young people active, “there is a chance that things will get better and that we will bring up young socially active people”. Such voluntary work teaches the young people within the gmina how to perform social actions and, additionally, this activity may provide a good example for their parents, thereby encouraging them to participate in community actions. Social actions in schools mould the future population and one of the teachers interviewed noted that “we must act together with young people and show them that they can do it, that they can see and resolve local problems. This is a chance for them to make life better and to become young socially active people”.

Previous initiatives in schools have included a broad range of activities including “The Circle Of Young Volunteers”, “Safe Roads”, “Help the One in Need”, “Us To Them”, “Santa Claus Action”, improving the playground near the school, landscaping the playground, prevention of breast cancer, “Read to Me, My Friend” as well as programmes addressed to people with special needs such as the “Help Chestnut Trees” project and.

The NGOs

The only NGO acting within the territory of the gmina, besides the voluntary fire brigades and the Circle of Rural Housewives, is the Social Educational Association (SEA). There are no agricultural cooperatives or groups of agricultural producers, no farming associations and no social committees. The idea to form the SEA dates back to 1999 and it was registered by the District Courts of Torun in February 2001. It was set up to generate external funding to perform a number of social-educational functions within the gmina. One of the reasons for its establishment was that its founders were closely connected with the local schools and were unable to raise funds for their projects independently. Moreover, in the opinion of its founder, Mrs Violetta Switalska, “quite often, being a government institution, i.e. a school or a gmina, we do not have access to outside funding”.⁶ To date, the society has organised youth camps and the following events: “Useful Holidays”, “Computer – Eye to the World”, “Cooking Time” and “Useful Tuesdays”. Frequently these programs are run jointly with the Circle of Rural Housewives.

Social Capital

Interest in public affairs

The case study revealed that the residents of Wapielsk only have an immediate, casual interest in public affairs. As one interviewee observed, “people get interested in what’s going on when it directly affects them”. A similar opinion was expressed by a clerk in the gmina office, “They get word of something accidentally. They don’t come to observe gmina council sessions, except, perhaps, when problems concerning their particular village are on the agenda”. Certainly, the local population do not seem to exhibit an on-going systematic involvement, or indeed, interest in gmina affairs.

The main sources of information exchange between the local administration and the residents are the village assemblies, meetings with firemen and teachers, and information bulletins on the notice-boards in the gmina office. The sessions of the local council and other meetings organised by the local administration are relatively ineffective in terms of spreading information and consulting with the residents, simply because most of the residents never attend them. It is also very rare for the residents to meet with the members of the council and the wójt during their duty hours. This only happens under emergency conditions and it certainly cannot be considered to be a firm, well established form of social dialogue.

The only local newspaper published in Wapielsk is the bulletin of the local council which is called “Nasza Gmina” (Our Gmina). It is published irregularly and not very professionally – “when it’s needed [and] it is published on a very primitive level” (school Principal). The gmina sources the materials to be included and a school Principal edits it, although, on his own admission, “it is not a newspaper, just some sort of a bulletin with mere facts in it”. The residents think that Nasza Gmina has a poor distribution network. One woman interviewed commented, “I think that dissemination among the people is poor, if I do not get it from the Principal, I cannot get it at all and an average resident does not get it”. The newspaper does not foment public spirit, neither does it inspire citizens to become involved in local affairs. It does not represent the interests and the needs of the residents, nor does it encourage them to get more interested in what is happening. Finally, it is not a forum for the exchange of opinions.

Only a few of the most respected and publicly active persons feel that they have any influence over life in the gmina. However, this feeling is not accompanied by any commitment to activate others or to increase their impact on what is going on. The residents are not using any of the available methods of pressure over the authorities, they take part in practically none of the sessions of the gmina Council, or other meetings organised by the local administration. There are two main reasons for this lack of participation: the weak informational policy of the gmina administration and poor access of particular groups who do have a direct interest in attending certain sessions. For example, teachers would like to be invited to sessions dealing with education: even though they know that these sessions are open so that, in principle they could attend, they would like to be given a special invitation.

Public involvement

Notwithstanding the general lack of public involvement in the gmina, there are a small number of examples of local leaders working for the benefit of the community they live in. When interviewees were asked whether there were any socially active people in the community, typical responses were, “I cannot say for sure that there are no such people at all, but there are very few” and “surely there are people who would like to do something, but generally people are indifferent”. Only the school

community seems active, particularly the secondary school in Radziki Duze, as well as the group of teachers led by Mrs. Viola Switalska. Besides the voluntary fire brigades and Circle of Rural Housewives, there is only the Social Educational Society.

Despite this, the interviewees revealed a great need of strong local elites that are able to exploit the dormant potential of local citizens, are committed to action and want better living conditions. However, the young priest in the gmina had a somewhat atypical experience, noting that: “when I was repairing my house, people used to help, they were bringing food for the workers and information went around the village that I needed help, even though it was not obligatory”. This reveals much about the local residents and about their readiness to help a person in need”.

According to popular opinion, the local authority does not pro-actively engage in any actions that could potentially benefit the community; instead they have to be prompted to carry out necessary works. In the words of a school Principal, “an invitation for action”. The gmina administration shows little interest in the process of recruiting teachers and school principals, in school community matters and achievements or in programmes that take place in school premises. Again the school Principal noted, “if you ask officials, they come to the school, but they are not really committed to jointly create a new reality.” In his view, this attitude works to the detriment of the local community because schools run “a number of programmes in which collaboration with the gmina administration is crucial, one of the conditions for their success is local presentation, hence such collaboration is a must”.

In the view of the residents, it is hard for people to do something together for their common benefit. This is most probably a result of a lack of local leaders who are able to harness the energy of the community for a particular idea or enterprise, although the passive, non-co-operative stand of the residents themselves exacerbates the problem. People working at the local social aid centre said that “people are not really willing to change their life for the better they do not believe that they can change things and do something together. There is also the problem of reaching people who prefer to sit at home and ruin their eyes in front of their TV”.

Obviously there is a widespread lack of belief in the local administration in terms of its perceived ability when it comes to their perceived ability to instigate change to improve the gmina. In addition, the administration itself does not come forward with good examples to follow; neither do they provide examples of gmina-individual joint actions, or of actions to help one’s neighbours or the community. In the view of the residents, it is the local administration that should come forward with initiatives and strategies to develop the gmina and improve living standards for the residents. The people expect their local officials to lead them and to stimulate social actions. This ends in a vicious circle since the administration expects activity from the residents, at least their self-sufficiency, while the people expect initiatives aimed at driving the gmina forward to come from the administration. The net result of these opposing views is that nothing happens.

Gmina development

After speaking to the wójt and to the gmina Secretary, the impression that was formed was that the local administration does not control the local development of its gmina at all. Worryingly, the officials concerned seemed not to be conscious of the need for any such efforts. When asked to point to their most important achievements, the authorities replied, “the construction of the central water supply in the gmina, part of the waterworks and sewage with waste purification facilities, the provision of a

telephone system, the construction of a new school building (as opposed to refurbishing of the old palace), maintaining the roads in reasonably good condition, the creation of the Gmina Communal Maintenance Company, paving the sidewalks, providing some outdoor lighting and undertaking school repairs”. Without wishing to diminish these achievements, sight must not be lost of the fact that this gmina is characterised by the low level of development of its infrastructure, implying that even the improvements detailed above still leave it lagging some way behind the national average. It is the belief of the local administrators that the main problems of the gmina can be traced to two characteristics of the territory. The first of these is agriculture which, in their view, dooms the community to a low level of development and economic stagnation and the second is the gmina’s peripherality, insofar as it is not situated close to any major thoroughfares. There are also feelings that a number of the gmina’s problems are actually caused by external factors and that any attempts to foster development and improve living standards within the community must also emanate from outside the gmina.

A typical attitude, of both residents and administrators, is to wait for better times, external aid and exogenous change, such as government policy regarding agriculture and rural development. This lack of self-dependence and creativity regarding both personal fortune and the prosperity of the community could be observed explicitly. Aside from the fact that it has adopted a development strategy, the administration has no other ideas about how to improve life in the gmina. The strategy, entitled “Local Development Strategy of the Gmina of Wapielsk up to the year 2012”, was adopted at the turn of the millennium.⁷ The gmina worked with an external company to devise the strategy and “for two days they brought a couple of people from the gmina together and held a workshop to discover what actions were required” (school Principal). The following individuals in fact participated in this process: a representative of the quarry’s management, a veterinarian, the school Principal, business representatives, a member of the Regional Agricultural Chamber and the Heads of the nearby villages.

According to the strategy, the overarching objective is: “Wapielsk with a developed agricultural sector, small and medium-sized enterprises, well-utilized natural and historical resources and high standards of living for its residents”. The means identified to achieve this are:

- The creation of development conditions for SMEs via the application of subsidies and preferences. Identifying in the local Spatial Plan possible location for SMEs. Attempting to organise local entrepreneurs into associations: such an attempt was made by the wójt, though with no results. The creation of an information bureau to co-operate with regional development institutions, although this bureau has not been established to date.
- Promoting the gmina using advertising fliers but this has never been done. Placing information in the mass media and organising gmina promotion events; nobody interviewed was aware of any such events. Participation in outside events.
- Fostering the development of SMEs by supplying training courses on how to start a new business.
- Creating new income sources in rural areas via training in agro-tourism, productive skills, tours and professional workshops. It should be noted here that only one agro-tourist company operates within the gmina and, in fact, while the owners of this establishment receive aid from the Agro-Tourist Association in Golub-Dobrzyn, they receive none from the local administration.

- Achieving a rational usage of local natural and historical resources by allowing private entrepreneurs to use the existing palace and park estates. Incorporating into the Local Spatial Plan landscaping of the areas near the Dlugie and Kielpiny lakes so that they can be used as recreational areas. The organisation of sport and tourist events aimed at promoting the natural treasures of the gmina.
- Upgrading the education level of the residents by setting up awards for the best students and teachers, as well as the establishment of a scholarship fund.
- Delivering higher living standards for the residents as the result of the fulfilment of the tasks and objectives of the strategy.
- Ensuring an adequate educational base, including organisation of school buses, school repairs and construction of sporting facilities; in the first instance, a sports field and a gym.
- Encouraging active resident participation and to provide support for all social and economic initiatives of the residents.
- Adequate management of waste and sewerage.
- Good roads.
- Improving technical infrastructure, although this mainly involves removing architectural restrictions.

Clearly the degree to which the above are realised depend both on external factors, such as government support for agriculture, and the commitment of the local authority. Disappointingly, however, “after one year it became clear that these plans were not realistic and not much of this strategy has actually been put into effect” (school Principal). On a more positive note, the administration planned to bring the strategy to the fore at the start of 2005. On the basis of available evidence, the wójt and his staff may face difficult times since the vast majority of residents are unaware of the Wapielsk Development Strategy and those interviewed noted that the process did not involve discussions with the community and neither were they made aware of the contents of the documentation, when it was eventually produced.

Wapielsk – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

The gmina’s development strategy lists, “soils of good quality, water resources, human resources, an advanced level of water supply, good management of waste and a developed telephone system” as strengths of the gmina. On the other hand, the locality exhibits significant weaknesses, such as poor management of water resources, a low level of agro-education, a poorly regulated system of waste management from the private farms, a poor location with respect to main communications, poor road conditions, insufficient employment, a low level of education, an inadequate sewage system, poor health of the residents, a poor medical service (only one doctor, etc.), dilapidated school buildings, a lack of sport and recreational facilities and a scattered distribution of both farms and houses.

Wapielsk’s chances are seen to lie in tourism and recreation, the development of agriculture and ecological projects, changes in the administrative structure, the creation of alternative income sources, the use of water collectors, inward investors, developing crafts and services, the processing of agricultural products and productively using the by-products from the Bydgoszcz mineral mine. From the perspective of local decision makers, although a certain amount of diversification is planned, the gmina’s development is intricately related to agriculture and allied activities.

However, Wąpielsk also faces potential threats in the form of increasing unemployment, inadequate funding of gmina projects, an absence of industrial development, poor government-agriculture relations, the growth of social diseases, the degradation of small farms, difficult conditions at the Bydgoszcz mine, reductions in gmina and individual incomes, a deterioration in health conditions, and a reduction in the quality of education.

The fieldwork revealed that the actual situation currently obtaining in the area means that the majority of the objectives espoused five years ago in the strategy have not been met. There are still very few SMEs, the area's natural and historical resources remain under utilised and the residents' living standards fall far short of what had been hoped for. Typically, in any discussions between the local officials and the residents, the latter group blame the former for the stagnation within the community, while the administration shifts the onus of the blame for the lack of progress on to some third party.

Attitudes towards the EU and the gmina's absorptive potential

The local turnout in the EU membership referendum was 47 per cent, with 52 per cent being in favour of accession and 48 per cent voting against it. Considering that Wąpielsk is a typical rural, peripheral gmina and given that Poles living in rural areas (especially farmers) were more likely to vote against membership, the result shows quite a positive attitude towards the Union. There was a pre-referendum campaign that took place mainly in the gmina's schools. There was an Information and Consultancy Centre for the residents because, as a school Principal noted, "at the wójt's office there was no such place". However, no one attended, proving that the interest in the referendum was low". Young people participated in the project "Young People Vote", which was run by Centre of Civil Education. The positive impact of this was noted by the Principal, who stated that "a lot of materials came to the schools, which then, with the help of the young people, reached their parents".

The likely financial gains that accession might bring to the gmina, are relatively small for the following reasons:

- The poor level of training of the local government personnel needed to prepare applications to secure funds. In the words of the gmina Secretary, "the wójt has the best knowledge of these matters and has one clerk who deals with the specific issue of infrastructure". The bidding process was explained by the wójt: "I send my clerk for training, and then the treasurer, the Secretary, my clerk and me try to write something. Of course, for the more sophisticated documentation we hire an outside company".
- The local authority has little knowledge about EU rural development projects or funds.
- There is a lack of information among the residents about how to use the EU funds and so they tend to be ignored. As one interviewee noted, "people would be happy to use EU assistance if someone were to help them and tell them how to start to prepare their applications" (the owner of the agro-tourist company).
- According to the gmina officials, the local conditions are less than favourable insofar as the gmina's size and its inability to supply co-funding makes the cost-efficiency and importance of their projects low: "in the case of such a small locality as ours, the balances turn out to be senseless, so our applications

do not look attractive and hardly make projects feasible. Our basic problem is our failure to present a cogent case for financing” (wójt).

The gmina has very limited experience in using EU and other public funds. The only funds generated to date were monies from the SAPARD programme designated for an infrastructure (sewerage) development project. The gmina did not participate in the Program for the Activation of Rural Territories which was financed by the World Bank. Nevertheless, the administration intends to apply for money from the Structural Funds and they intend to make two applications to the Integrated Programme of Local Development for improving sewerage and roads. In the opinion of a school Principal, “plans for getting funds are fine, but they only make sense when there is someone who knows how to get them”.

In terms of the abilities of the local citizens to seek EU support, most of them applied for the direct subsidies for farmers. Nevertheless, they have a sceptical opinion about the likelihood that EU assistance will improve their standard of living. Furthermore, they seem to have large information gaps, “they are afraid to start, they need someone who could prompt them, tell how to start and use their chance” (the owner of the agro-tourist company).

Summary

On the basis of personal observations and an analysis of available materials, it cannot be said that strong and varied collaborative links exist between Wapielsk’s residents. Social events are few and the level of social consciousness appears to be rather low. The activity of the gmina’s Cultural Centre is limited to the weekly rentals of its hall for discothèques and there is no evidence of any forces that are actually working to shape the local community. There is no identifiable elite negotiating and supporting change and it is only the school community that seems to act in an efficient manner. Apart from the Voluntary Firemen and the Circle of Rural Housewives, the gmina houses only one NGO – the Social Educational Society – a grouping that mainly involves school teachers.

Furthermore, although Wapielsk is a typical agricultural gmina, there are no agro-industrial companies or food processing plants in its territory and the local farmers are not organised. Additionally, the community’s settlement structure exacerbates the problem, since the thinly spread distribution of dwellings does not promote the development of local links and the integration of the residents. In particular, the gmina office is not located in the centre, neither is it to found in an area where community life is conducted. Similarly, the villages are scattered and are home to only a small number of residents. Also, there is no public space where the residents could meet to discuss common matters and Wapielsk lacks recreational facilities where both adults and young people could spend their free time. The library is only open for a limited period of time and there is not a single place where young people can meet, talk and develop their hobbies.

Religious ties cannot be separated from the other local ties, insofar as the parish is supposed to be an integrative institution functioning at the local level around which the life of community revolves, which reflects the fact that the situation in Wapielsk is rather complicated (Bartkowski, 2004: 274). As noted above, although there are five parishes in the territory, only one is located totally within the gmina and there is therefore no community-wide participation in services. Normally, parish ties would be expected to create social unity but, in Wapielsk, the church does not create spatial unity and neither does it provide a physical space where people could meet

regularly and undertake common actions to benefit their community. Together, these factors have led to insularity, isolation and outward migration and, hence, a general weakening in the integration of the community.

Religiosity and social integration are intimately connected with the intensity of various types of social pathologies. In contrast, strong local unity causes firm social control and makes a neighbour's opinion important (*ibid.*: 276). In Wapielsk, it is difficult even to speak about any such social control, since nothing like it exists. People declare that they are scared to leave their houses after dark and they never leave their homes unlocked. As the ladies working at the gmina Centre of Social Support state, "the youngsters steal, though the parents deny this fact, they get angry when their children are accused and the children have permission to steal so one cannot leave a house unlocked...". A similar view was expressed by a farmer, "after discothèques, drunken youngsters vandalise the bus stops and destroy the road signs. You cannot even speak to these men, neither the ones from this gmina nor those from others since they are angry and aggressive. They have, for example, broken the plastic on my greenhouse and stolen my tomatoes. People know who it is that is doing it, but they prefer to keep quiet".

If there is social control in Wapielsk it is not of the kind that gives positive motivation and encourages residents to act, compete or distinguish themselves. On the contrary, "people lock themselves at home glued to their TVs" (Mrs. Switalska). There is no spirit of private enterprise or a favourable climate to start private business initiatives. Most of the people interviewed spontaneously described it as the "Polish hell".

The gmina's administration does not seem to be creative in its efforts to improve the well-being of the residents. Officials do not exercise effective control over gmina development and, what is more, they seem to be unaware of such a necessity. A typical attitude among both residents and the administration is to look to the outside for help in the form of changed external conditions. In particular, the local authority is expecting a change in government policy regarding agricultural and rural areas and, furthermore, it expects support from the EU Structural Funds. The residents simply expect aid from the gmina. The lack of self-dependence and creativity in shaping personal fortunes and the wealth of the community was palpable within the community. On a positive note, although there is widespread non-involvement, there are a small number of examples of local leaders working for the benefit of the community they live in. As a school Principal noted, "there are individuals who would like to do something and, indeed, some who do something, but generally people are indifferent".

5. Case study 3: Korycin

Background

Korycin is a rural gmina located forty kilometres south of Białystok, in the Sokółski powiat of Podlaskie, close to the Baltica highway. Compared to other Polish communities, Korycin does not exhibit a particularly good development trajectory but, as noted above, it was identified by experts as a community that exhibited potential and had pursued innovative local initiatives. The gmina has been a king's town since the sixteenth century and it has preserved its old traditions. Historical coats of arms are still in evidence and the local society is aware of its rich ancestry and the halcyon days of the area. The territory used to be occupied by the Russian empire; however, today, the gmina's population is almost one hundred per cent Polish, despite the closeness of the Belarus border.

The gmina's four hundred residents reside in 33 villages occupying 117 square kilometres. Korycin is a typical medieval town, with a market square at its centre. Single-family detached brick houses dominate the village – there are very few two-storey houses – and, typically, these have gardens. It is noticeable that there are low fences and that most doors and gates do not have locks, which suggests that the residents do not perceive robbery to be a serious problem in their community. The majority of the houses are well maintained and many are equipped with individual sewage treatment facilities. The streets of the village are paved and lit and the road signs bear the heraldic signs of Korycin. At the central square there is a little park with a Marshal Pilsudski monument and there is also a billboard listing information about the history of the area. Close to this square, housed in a modern two-storey building, are the gmina's administrative offices, the public library, a centre for culture and sport, a café and a kindergarten run by the J.A. Komenski Foundation.

The gmina does not have any special natural or landscape treasures. Most of the territory is typically agricultural, with farmland occupying approximately 85 per cent of the gmina's undulating lands. The river Kumiałka, along with the tributaries of the rivers Brzozówka and Biebrza, flow through the gmina and, on the first of these, an artificial water reservoir was built in 2002, close to Korycin village. The idea behind this venture was to make the area more attractive to tourists, since the locality has only limited forests covering 931 hectares, which is less than eight per cent of the gmina's area. Somewhat unfortunately, however, a busy national highway – the S8 Białystok- Augustów link road – runs right by the side of the reservoir making it less attractive than it might otherwise be, particularly given the number of lorries using this route on a daily basis.

Abundant strawberry harvests have earned Korycin the nickname “strawberry basin” and there is actually a public holiday associated with strawberry harvesting. Although this has been a local tourist attraction for some time, the organisers believe that it is coming to assume national significance. Both the administration in Korycin and the residents are convinced that the area has significant tourism potential. However, a report written by external experts – “The Development Conditions Study” – considered that the gmina's proximity to the S8 road afforded the best potential for its development. Nevertheless, a lot of effort has been put into making the gmina more attractive for tourists. In addition to the water reservoir, a sports complex is due to be built on the banks of the lake and there are three bicycle routes making it possible to visit the ruins of the early medieval towns of Aulakowszczyzna and Milewszczyzna. In and around the first of these are wooden Dutch watermills and many traditional houses dating back to the turn of the twentieth century, as well as road chapels, crosses and watermills. Unfortunately, the gmina can only accommodate

eighty tourists and there is only one restaurant that serves hot food. The gmina has a professionally designed website (<http://www.korycin.pl>) that provides information for visitors and investors, as well as for local residents wishing to obtain a fishing permit. Gmina employees update the site and run the discussion forum. A recent poll conducted interactively sought to elicit views on Korycin and received 307 replies. In response to the question “what do you think about the gmina?” thirty per cent of respondents rated the area as “super”, while one-quarter voted for “I love Korycin”. The remainder had no particular views about the area.

In 2002, 3,626 individuals lived in the gmina of whom 48.6 per cent were women. Population trends for the locality mirror those observed at the national level; a declining birth rate, an ageing population and migration from rural areas to major cities. Overall, the gmina faces a net reduction in population of some 27 per annum, a figure that is actually proportionately lower than those for the both Sokólski powiat and the Podlaskie voivodship. Korycin’s population density is 31 people per square kilometre whereas the corresponding figure for the whole powiat is sixty. Those of working age constitute 56.4 per cent of the population, 24.6 per cent fall into the pre-working age band leaving 18.9 per cent post-working age. Approximately four per cent of the population have a university education, one-quarter are educated to college level and almost twenty per cent have a general technical school background.

Agriculture is important to the gmina’s economy. Farming land accounts for 85 per cent of the total surface area, with almost two-thirds being arable and the rest meadows and marshlands. In contrast to the national situation, more than forty per cent of farms have more than 15 hectares of land that are market oriented and likely to remain competitive in the foreseeable future. At the other end of the spectrum, only seven per cent of all farms are smaller than one hectare.

Overall, 67 per cent of residents – some 2,465 individuals – are in work, with more than two-thirds of them running their own farming businesses. In 2002, there were 164 people unemployed, 61 of whom were women. This translates into a gmina unemployment rate of 9.4 per cent, which is considerably lower than the corresponding figures for the powiat (16%) and the voivodship (15%) and is doubtless a reflection of the dominance of agriculture in the gmina’s employment structure. Nonetheless, gmina officials view unemployment as a major social problem in Korycin. In addition, much of the gmina’s employment is of a seasonal nature, fulfilling labour needs for the harvest and the strawberry festival, although municipal infrastructure modernisation is also providing some temporary jobs.

Social and institutional actors

Institutional actors within the community include the gmina’s administration, its Council, the Union of Gminas of Kumialka-Biebrza, which was established in 1996, the Union of Gminas of Biebrzańsk, which came into being a year later, the Polish Union of Rural Gminas, and Union of the Rural Gminas of Podlaskie Voivodship, founded in 2000. In addition to these, are the 31 village administrators (sołtysi), schools (a primary and a secondary school), the public library, the Centre of Culture and Sport, the Centre of Social Aid, Voluntary Firemen, the public kindergarten, the Jan Komeński Foundation’s kintergarden, the local parish, the Korycin Union of Cheese Producers, the Society of Sympathisers with the Land of Korycin and the Association of Strawberries Producers. However, in terms of importance, the following must be singled out: the wójt, the Director of the gmina’s Centre of Social Aid, the Chief Librarian, the former Director of the gmina’s Centre of Culture and Sport, the local priest and the vicar. In addition to these, a number of highly regarded

individuals live in the gmina. Practically all of those identified were recognised, both by the residents and the fieldworkers, as being important for the development of the local community.

Gmina Administration

Administratively, the gmina remains under the strong control of the wójt, who has been in power since 1991. The residents believe he has changed things for the better, with many affording him the endearing nickname of “Daddy”. In short, he is regarded as a patriarch, a wise and kind, although sometimes severe, father of the gmina. The locally held view is that “if the wójt cannot give, then no one else can”. The wójt, who grew up in Korycin, is relatively young at 44 and is a history graduate who studied in Białystok at an institution affiliated to Warsaw University. He is a member of the Presidium of the Union of Rural Gminas of Poland, the Chairman of the Union of Rural Gminas of Podlaskie Voivodship (created on his initiative in 2000) and the President of the Union of Gminas of Kumiałka-Biebrza. During the period 1998-2002, he was a member of the council of the Powiat of Sokolsk. The wójt’s wife is a history teacher in the local secondary school, but she does not play a significant role in the social and public life of the gmina. Right from the beginning of his term of office, the wójt has consistently championed plans to develop the gmina, often in the face of opposition from other residents. One example of this was the decision to close small village schools and to replace them with a large schooling complex accommodating all of the children.

The wójt considers it important that the gmina has a reputable external reputation and strong contacts. In part to promote its image, the gmina administration, in collaboration with the Centre of Culture and Sports and the Centre of Social Assistance, organises several cultural events.⁸ Korycin has also been pro-active in submitting applications for European funding and also participates in projects with a range of social and institutional partners, including kintergarden provision with the Jan Komeński Foundation and a health initiative with the Medical Academy in Białystok. The gmina also publishes a biennial bulletin – On the Banks of Kumiałka – which provides information on cultural events taking place in the area. The residents, however, view the bulletin as an advertising tool targeted at visitors and do not consider it to be a useful medium for locals.

In many ways the wójt is the *spiritus movens* of the gmina’s development, since he initiates innovation and new solutions in the territory. He is an ideas generator and a good organiser and executor of planned projects. The wójt has also passed on his management skills to his team of officials who are able to work independently, given that they know what is expected of them. Together they form a confident team that actively seeks out aid funds from numerous sources. In addition, the wójt is also involved with funds for certain initiatives; sometimes as a sponsor and sometimes as an employer. Superficially at least, the wójt faces no internal opposition and the local administrators willingly go along with his decisions. However, the wójt’s domination over personnel is a controversial issue and often officials are afraid to suggest new proposals for fear of upsetting him and subsequently losing their job.

In addition to his normal duties, the wójt is also the Chairman of the Council of the Voluntary Fire Brigade. This fire brigade has two appliances and several residents of Korycin serve in it. The firemen also harbour misgivings, having complained about their position *vis-à-vis* those serving in the professional fire service in a neighbouring locality. In particular, they were aggrieved by the fact that when

accidents happened on their roads, the professionals were called out because the local brigade lacked the necessary equipment. In their view, this caused unnecessary delays and they were unhappy that the wójt had done nothing to rectify the situation, in spite of their pleas for him to act. In fact, the volunteer firemen were critical about other aspects of life in the gmina and, in particular, were scathing about the omnipotence of the wójt and his control of economic activity.

The wójt possesses all the necessary features of a leader; he is generally respected, because his activities have been successful, and he is regarded as an honest person who is working for the benefit of the whole community. However, he is not a person who avoids conflicts. As a former official who used to work at the wójt's office said, "I respect him for his hard work for the community and he is an honest man who has not gone into private business to make money for himself. However, the way he treats his personnel makes me angry. He is of the view that he is always right and he never cares if someone has a different opinion and he will always pursue his own inclinations". Furthermore, the residents also complained that the wójt does not give work to those whose opinions differ from his. Given the power and money he controls, people who have clashed with him consider themselves to be in a very vulnerable situation.

Much of the conflict between the residents and the wójt derives from the means by which planned objectives are to be achieved. Although the wójt was born in the gmina, he does not come from Korycin village and some observers claim that when he took power, he mistreated the former clerks, many of whom were dismissed from their office, because he is a tough anti-communist. In his defence, the wójt claims that he fired incompetent clerks from the previous team in order to assemble a new, competent and resilient local staff. The wójt is a young, highly educated man who uses modern methods to achieve his goals in the most efficient manner. He has no time for social or family relations or, as he puts it, "sentiments". In a small community, where everything is based on personal contacts, such an attitude can cause upset. After introducing the educational reforms, the wójt found himself in sharp conflict with the residents and the local council. Notwithstanding opposition from the residents, he went ahead regardless and many still cannot forgive him, despite the fact that they like the new school. Nowadays, they complain about their children's difficulties and the problems of organising extra-curricular activities for them. Furthermore, there is some disquiet over the fact that the wójt seems to act like the school was his personal property. He has made it known that the Principal, who he appointed, has not been as active as he hoped. Indeed, the wójt himself confirmed that although he considers the work of the Principal to be satisfactory, he is not so happy with his weak social stand. In the Principal's defence, he can only operate within the limits set by the wójt, although he is rather poorly motivated to show extra involvement. Additional disquiet was also expressed by some clerks who accused the wójt of extravagance over the area's promotion, including excessively generous receptions.

The Korycin Union of Cheese Producers

Rennin-fermented cheese has been produced by the local farmers for centuries in Korycin. The traditional recipes for making such cheese date back to the Swedish invasion in the seventeenth century. The cheese is now produced using traditional methods by forty farms and these producers have had many successes at marketing events throughout Poland. The Union was established to protect the interests of local producers and to ensure that the cheese gained official EU recognition as a local

product. Once again, the wójt was a prominent champion, committed to the creation of a new regional product. Furthermore, the gmina offers free legal assistance to the Union and provides administrative help. In association with the gmina, the Union organizes the Days of Cheese festival, which it plans to turn into a regular event.

Other employers

As is the case in most agricultural gminas, there are no large business entities in Korycin. In 2002, 149 companies were registered in the territory, 12 of which were public sector operations. Of the remainder, 112 were small businesses. Apart from the farmers, local businessmen do not seem to be well organized and co-operation between them is mostly limited to administrative agreements and receiving information about additional funding. The largest local employers are a prospering mill and a saw-mill. The old agricultural machinery co-operative (SKR) was turned into multi-functional factory called Prodmech. In recent times, Prodmech has operated as an agricultural machine repair garage, a distributor of spare parts, a manufacturer of wire fences and a charcoal distributor. In all of its guises the company was inefficient, production was regularly halted and it is currently on the verge of collapse. The remainder of the private sector consists mainly of individual farms and small family businesses neither of which employ many people.

Both the gmina residents and the local authority are hoping that the plans for an Agrofrost strawberry processing plant will come to fruition. In principle, a joint stock company was supposed to be building the factory and the company's representatives have had a number of meetings with the local administration. However, not all of the local strawberry growers have positive feelings about this new business, worrying about the dishonesty of the Warsaw businessmen who run the enterprise. At the time of writing, construction of the factory is being delayed and some local growers are no longer relying on selling their berries to Agrofrost.

Korycin also boasts some small service outlets, including household goods shops, a hairdresser and one canteen, which serves only alcohol. On the road to Sokółki there is a small tavern called "Biesiada" that is renowned for good meals and enjoys a good reputation among drivers. Furthermore, its large parking area makes it very popular with lorry drivers. The tavern is a family enterprise that also serves meals for special events such as weddings and baptisms. Its owners are highly respected within the community and are considered to be people who owe their success to hard and honest work.

An important element of local business environment is the co-operative bank, which grants lax credits to the farmers for purchasing equipment and grain. Most farmers enjoy long term loans from this institution. In addition, the bank frequently sponsors local events and it also provides support to a local school.

Schools

As mentioned above, a school complex was established in 2001 which effectively merged all the gmina's primary schools and, currently, over four hundred pupils are studying there. The buildings, which originally housed Korycin village's primary and secondary schools, have been modernised and refurbished and a gym and a football field have been added. The school has Internet access and the students have created their own website. Computing classes for local residents are also run in the new complex. There is also a well equipped school library with twelve thousand volumes. In November 2002, the school established collaboration with the Molodechno school in Belarus and since then they have organised regular student and teacher exchanges.

During these visits, students stay in the homes of their counterparts and tours are organised for them. In addition, the school also organises the following powiat events: a “Skills and Knowledge” contest, a competition based on knowledge of the holy bible, and sessions for young ecologists along with the environmental educational program “My Environment”. The students also publish their own bulletin “Nasza Gazetka” (our newspaper) and there are several special interest groups functioning in the school. After class activities are also organised and transportation is provided to take the children home. The school provides hot meals for its pupils, 280 of which are provided free of charge to children from poor families. These meals are paid for by the gmina’s Social Aid centre. The teaching personnel of the secondary school tend to be recruited from the staff of the primary schools.

The school Principal is not a socially active person and cannot be regarded as a local leader. In the eyes of the residents, he is not considered to be “one of ours” as he does not have family roots in the community and he is not particularly well known in the area. Although the residents rarely communicate directly with him, both they and the wójt are of the opinion that he is doing his job well. Thus, notwithstanding the fact that it is not in the Principal’s nature to propose new initiatives, he does introduce new ideas devised elsewhere.

John Paul II kindergarten

Even in the face of financial and organisational problems, the gmina manages to maintain the local kindergarten. There are two groups of children: a cohort of six-year olds who are brought by the school bus from around the entire gmina and one group of 25 children aged between three and five who mainly come from families with two working parents. One of the major logistical problems with the kindergarten is that it is quite distant from where the majority of the children live.

The Culture and Sport Centre

This is one of the most significant institutions in the gmina that organises dancing, theatrical, vocal and artistic events for children and young people. It also arranges summer tours for children and sports classes. It was involved with the Polish-American Freedom House Foundation “Act Locally” initiative. For older residents there is the “Époque” choir which came into being five years ago. The Director of this Centre also represents the gmina in the “Where there are no Kindergartens” programme which is supported by the Jan Komenski Foundation and aims to improve educational opportunities for children aged between three and five years in rural areas. It is hoped that the gmina will be able to create alternative forms of education for these children by involving parents, teachers, local administrators and family support institutions. The gmina is one of fourteen in Poland selected for this pilot project and it already operates in the former primary schools in Zabrodz and Bomble, as well as in specially designated rooms in Korycin itself. During the school year 2003-04, 28 children participated in the project. Responsibility for the delivery of this programme lies with the directors of the Culture and Sport and Social Aid centres and they also collaborate with the kindergarten, the public library, the Scouts and the local Parish. They organise events for parents and teachers, as well as bus tours to museums and theatres in Białystok. The children participating in the scheme often meet those from the public kindergarten and, in fact, they share a playground. They also meet during local children’s events, such as the Carnival of the Coming of Spring.

Notwithstanding its successes, the Director of the centre has frequent conflicts with the gmina clerks and residents. The former accuse her of a lack of respect for her

subordinates and of underestimating their work. Also, their salaries have remained unchanged for two years. In addition, instructors who gave additional classes in the centre complained that their salaries have been delayed for months and many of them have had to leave their work. The Director is not respected by the people and is considered to be incompetent. On the other hand, she is the only person who actually complained about the passiveness of the residents. This, at least in part, is a reflection of the fact that people boycott what she is doing. It is not enough simply to be a leader in a small community, one must also enjoy prestige and social support.

Mention should also be made of the retired Director of the centre, who held the position for thirty years and was the driving force behind culture in the community. Her major success was the construction of the gmina office building at the end of the nineteen-eighties, which everyone remembers. Originally, the building housed the Culture and Sports centre, but after the administrative changes at the start of the transition period the local administration moved in. As the retired Director commented: “they had nowhere to go, so I took them, what could I do? this building is like my child.”

The Public Library

The library is also an important institution within the gmina and the chief librarian is one of the local leaders deeply involved in its cultural life. She co-organises all the important events in the area and also initiates occasional library competitions for children, such as the Christmas “szopka” (puppet show). By so doing she tries to involve as many children as possible and to encourage them to read books. Together with the children, she keeps the chronicle of the village, which is rich with photos and describes the most important events and tours. She seems to have a very close relationship with the children, who like to go there and who treat the library as a nice place to read books, to do homework, to get prepared for lessons, to gain free access to the Internet, to use the Xerox machine (for a charge) or to print. The librarian is highly respected in society and has many friends. This is typified by the success of the New Year’s Eve party that was organised by her. In spite of its high cost (200 PLN), 117 people bought tickets within two days of them going on sale. In the words of the librarian, people “want to have fun together, because they like one another, and the previous New Year’s Eve party, organised with the previous Director of the Cultural Centre, was quite successful”.

The Social Aid Centre

The Director of this centre liaises with the church and a number of organisations such as: Caritas, the Department of PCK, the Polish Committee of Social Aid, the gmina’s Circle of Pensioners and Retired Persons and the Club of Honourable Blood Donors. According to the Director: “the club members are very involved and once every two months a group from Knyszyn visits us and people come by car from all over the gmina, from very distant places, yet no one complains that it is Sunday and that it would be better to be at home”. One very successful initiative was the Ball of the Honourable Blood Donors, with the money raised by the event being donated to charity. The centre also mediates in official alimony cases and affords status to people unable to work. It provides social services and assistance and deals with social housing, public education, family policy, medical aid and action to prevent alcohol and drug addiction.

The Director is a very active individual who does not limit himself solely to his designated tasks, but also gets involved in granting aid, not only as a member of

an institution, but also as an individual. He is a good example of a social activist who derives pleasure from his work and who is happy to help. He is enthusiastic about his role and tries hard to disseminate relevant information to those that need it. Any decisions he makes regarding aid giving are only taken after personal conversations with the potential beneficiaries and he is, therefore, well aware of their living conditions.

In addition, he also organises numerous events for children and senior citizens and participates in the gmina's cultural life. Not only does he benefit the school by funding free meals, he also actively seeks out information on any NGO sponsored children's competitions. Because of his activities, the Director is a "grey cardinal" of both kindergartens. He is generally respected by the residents, both for his work, to which he is totally dedicated, and for his ability to find funding opportunities. The Director is also a member of the local branch of Caritas, working in conjunction with his counterpart at the Culture Centre. This charity organises holidays and youth summer camps, as well as giving material assistance and selling candles for various charitable causes. It is also involved with food aid to those identified by the Archdiocese of Bialystok to be in need of such help.

The Church

The Parish of Discovery and Exaltation of the Cross in Korycin covers most of the territory, although there is one more parish in Bomble, which also covers an area that is outside the borders of the gmina. Almost all the residents are now Roman Catholics, with previous religious minorities now been assimilated into the faith. The church is located on a hill close to Korycin village, behind the busy Bialystok-Augustów road. The traffic is dangerous for people approaching the church, children in particular, and the priests are hoping that a by-pass will be built in order to make the local road safer.

The residents are generally devout, with approximately thirty per cent of them attending Sunday services and each major church holiday being accompanied by a Holy Mass. The parish co-operates with the Social Aid centre and they jointly organise most social events, such as children's discothèques and benefits for disaster victims. They also undertake some larger projects, such as foreign trips for people with special needs. The parish priest does not seem to be deeply involved in the life of gmina any longer. However, he is highly regarded by the residents for what he has done during his many years of service. As one of the executives from the Social Aid centre noted, "the priest is a holy man who personally funds the summer camp for kids".

The priest is a senior person who supports the activities of the gmina administration. During services he gives out information about any of the administration's initiatives that are of importance; for example, assistance with applications for direct subsidies, celebrations of gmina holidays and mammography inspections. He also acts as an intermediary between the residents and the administration although he is not, and has never been, politically active and has never been involved in election campaigning. Even though the priest does not himself initiate any development actions in the community, his backing for the efforts of the local administration adds weight to their activities.

The vicar is also involved with young people, teaching religion in the local schools. In addition, he spends a lot of time attempting to engage the young, including any children with problems. He organises events for young people outside school, such as summer camps, bicycle rides, barbeques, soccer games and skiing events. He

is also involved with the discothèques run by the Social Aid and Culture centres. His activity is very visible and whilst the residents speak about the priest with reverence, the vicar's attitude attracts general enthusiasm. The vicar is an open person, a very good educational specialist who is helping to bring up a new socially active generation of young people. In his own words, "I want to show something to these young people show them that they could spend their time not in front of their TVs, I would like to show them the wider world".

Society of Sympathisers of the Land of Korycin

In contrast to the various organisations discussed above, this society does not seem to be involved in many gmina activities. It mainly performs a limited number of representative functions and its members attend meetings and publish publicity materials.

Ties between social actors and the gmina institutions

The residents of the gmina constitute a strongly integrated local community, with basic inter-personal relationships being directly supported by family and friends. Members of the community share mutual respect that has endured for many generations. The residents are also quite friendly to outsiders and they willingly give out information about their gmina. They also care about their place of residence and are interested in any development activities in the area.

The relationship between the local residents and their leaders is one of on-going collaboration. The officials mobilise people to help out with activities which benefit the community and jointly they organise all gmina holidays and festivals. As the residents noted, "this is our holiday and we prepare it for many months". At the same time, the leaders appreciate that: "without the generosity and activity of these people we could have achieved nothing here, it would be like pouring water through sand, no money could help." Mutual sympathies play an important role in this collaboration. In addition, the existence of numerous social committees bears witness to the high level of self organisation of the residents.

The administration also collaborates with numerous NGOs; a good example being its work with the Jan Kominski Foundation. Even after the pilot project, the administration is still willing to continue to work with the Foundation, even at its own expense. The Director of the Social Aid centre described the interaction between the leaders in the following words: "one institution is almost nothing; if they join together, they can do the work".

In Korycin, work and private property are held in high regard, which may be connected to the fact that there were previously no collective farms in the territory and for generations the residents have been the owners of their land. As the retired Director of the Culture centre noted, "we have always been here, we were born here as long as my husband and I have land, we must take care of it; after all, this was the land of my father". In addition, the residents also feel responsible for their neighbours' fortunes and a strong tradition of neighbourly help exists. As the Director of the Social Aid centre explained, "two houses burned down recently that were not insured and whole families were left out under the open sky. We wrote to the Bialystok Charitas explaining that these families needed furniture, kitchen utensils and clothing. When it arrived, we were shocked by its high quality; one lady said that she was afraid to use such neat blankets for her children and that they would never earn enough money in their lifetime to enable them to purchase such furniture". Another example of the neighbourly outlook is that when people have items such as

furniture and white goods that they no longer need, they find a needy family and take the goods to them. Likewise, the residents are used to making donations, so when someone needs help there is no problem.

Within the village there is also a tradition of individuals undertaking unpaid work for the benefit of the community. As one resident noted, “our officials turn into social activists after working hours, otherwise we would not have enough money to accomplish all that we want to do”. The local inhabitants also have a generous attitude towards strangers, such as the illegal Belarusian workers that arrive for the strawberry harvests. These foreigners are well treated by the locals and no-one within the village mentioned any cases of xenophobia. On the contrary, because a number of young women from the village have left to go to live in large cities, the women from Belarus are considered by the young male residents to be potential wives.

The role of the local actors in the gmina's development

The gmina's development strategy

To date Korycin has no formal document detailing its development strategy. However, in 1999, an independent researcher produced a report entitled “A Study of Development Conditions” and certain of the recommendations from this work have been implemented. In addition to this, the gmina has produced a number of documents, such as “A Local Development Plan for Korycin 2004-2006”, “An Investment Plan”, drawn up in 2003 and “A Local Plan for Managing the Spatial Economy”, which is still at the draft stage.

The local development plan referred to above covers three groups of activities that have been identified as central to the future growth of the area. The first relates to improving the quality of life of the residents and involves the development of a resort area near to the water reservoir and improvements in the medical infrastructure. Currently, for example, the ambulance service is being upgraded. The second stream of activities is to develop the local road network by repairing existing roads and building new ones. Some modernisation has already taken place and the gmina is seeking funds to continue this work. The third area of activity concerns environmental improvements, such as the modernization of ecologically dangerous boilers and improvements to the water supply and sewage systems, with the latter projects already well underway. In addition, the dumping area that the gmina uses now does not meet environmental norms and will be closed by 2009. The local authority hopes that many of these tasks will be financed by the EU's Structural Funds.

The investment plan covers the period 2007-2013 and includes repairs to bus stops, the reconstruction of the market square in Korycin, the construction of new facilities for the local fire brigade, the refurbishment of the park by the church, the construction of a sports complex by the school and further modernisation of the road network. These actions are included in priority number three of the regional development programme (ZPORR), which is financed by the Structural Funds.

Unemployment remains one of the major development problems in Korycin and the gmina administration believes that one of its most important tasks is create non-agricultural jobs. In furtherance of this aim, it wishes to attract investors into the area and is seeking to make the area as visible as possible via a number of promotional campaigns. The area presents itself as the major Polish strawberry centre and has a special logo to advertise its strawberry days. The planning and co-ordination of this event involves everyone in the gmina administration and the festival is very high-profile and includes competitions, presentations, performances by young people, concerts and entertainments. For the last ten years, this event has been covered by

Polish radio and television. Most of the residents are either involved in the organisation of the event and/or they participate in it. It is also recognised as an important occasion by the residents of neighbouring gminas and, for many years, people have travelled from the most remote corners of Poland to attend.

The gmina is also the joint organiser with neighbouring Janów of the Milky marathon. Not only is this race popular with locals, it attracts foreign runners, some of whom receive significant inducements to participate. The event is also used to promote the health benefits of sport. In September of each year, there is also the Days of Korycin festival. In 2004, this was used to promote the local cheese as a new regional product. The local leaders are all involved in these events. Korycin often participates and wins various competitions and gets numerous awards. In 2004, the Minister of Environmental Protection awarded it the title of “Leader of Polish Ecology” for its environmental protection activities over the period 1992-2004. The same activities also brought the gmina a 400,000 PLN award in the “Our Gmina in Europe” competition organised by the National Fund of Environment and Water Resources Protection. In addition, the area also gained the rights to use the national promotion symbol “Green Lungs of Poland” for the period 2003-2006.

The gmina has a crest that appears on street signs, on local leaflets and publications, as well as on cups and plates in the gmina office. It also has its own professionally made promotion folders and information fliers about projects and collaborative undertakings. In a similar vein, the bulletin of the gmina “Over Kumiałka River” details cultural events taking place. In addition, the parish publishes a calendar and the gmina also has a professionally designed web page providing information on attractions and local tourist sites. This website is frequently updated, whereas comparable sites for other gminas tend not to be.

The gmina has good, frequent contacts with the media and, for the last ten years, it has hosted the “Lato z Radiem” (Summer with Radio) programme during the strawberry festival. This is transmitted by Radio 1, which is the most widely listened to channel in Poland. The gmina also collaborates with, and gets awards from, the women’s magazine “Gospodyni” (Matron). Events in the community frequently attract television attention and information about activities in the area often appear on the front pages of Podlaskie voivodship newspapers such as, “Gazeta Wyborcza Białystok”, “Gazeta Współczesna” and “Kurier Poranny”.

Korycin hopes that its continued applications to various funds and its participation in numerous competitions will provide a positive stimulus for development. As part of its promotional efforts, it has attempted to produce a regional product and it received the Pearl Award at the 2004 PolAgra Farm Festival in Poznań for its Swojski cheese, as well as receiving an award in the national food competition Our Culinary Heritage.

The gmina is also keen to develop its tourism sector and treks and bike roads have already been constructed. However, the area is disadvantaged by its location; it is relatively close to Poland’s famous lakes and the Puszcza Knyszyńska national park, but not close enough to profit from them. In comparison, Korycin, which has fewer forests, looks relatively unattractive. The water reservoir and resort area is supposed to bring visitors, but this is not guaranteed. First, the attraction itself is next to a very busy road and this might deter holiday makers. Second, there is a dearth of tourist accommodation, with only eighty beds available in the area and there are very few of the agro-tourism establishments that are popular with Poles. The catering facilities are also sub-standard. The only pub in Korycin does not serve any hot dishes and only offers snacks such as peanuts and crisps. The Biesiada tavern has a good

reputation, but its roadside location makes it more popular with drivers than with people staying in the area.

Another factor that severely retards the gmina's development prospects is its poorly educated population, with almost fifty per cent of the inhabitants having been educated to no more than primary level. This problem has been accepted within the local administration and a number of actions are underway that are targeted at improving education and access to cultural services. These activities are primarily based around the schools. The new school complex has modern computer facilities and a well-stocked library. The chief librarian noted that the wójt had sanctioned 10,000 PLN for new books. Many teachers deliver extra-curriculum classes and special development programmes for the pupils. However, whilst the initiatives in place are benefiting the younger generation, educational attainment amongst the post-school population remains extremely low.

Local leaders' opinions on rural development

As noted above, the priority of the local gmina is to create jobs outside farming and to make people's incomes less dependent on agriculture. In the words of the wójt, "we want to give additional work to our farmers, and that's why we are committed to developing agro-tourism". At the same time, the administration also realises the importance of its promotions and the protection of regional products and is therefore supporting the local Union of Cheese Producers. Both the administration and residents agree that it is important that the gmina promotes the specific advantages it has, not least because the area does not have any outstanding natural resources or treasures. The local government also recognises that farming must change and is aiming to make agriculture and food processing more competitive, by assisting young farmers, supporting local producers' groups and improving food processing methods. In this respect, the Agrofrost plant is crucial to the prospects for the area.

Other community leaders and the residents agree with the administration's development aims. In fact, no-one doubts that the gmina needs to improve its roads, reservoir, sewerage, sources of water, by-passes and highways, pavements and its promotional activities. However, while they feel that what is taking place is benefiting them, they often disagree about the methods employed. As one individual noted, "the wójt gives work to the chaps from the outside and does not employ us, so we are doomed to sit here in the White House [the local public house]." Furthermore, as noted above, there is lingering resentment concerning the wójt's decision to rationalise the schools; a project that all the residents opposed.

In order to realise certain initiatives and in order to strengthen their cooperation with the gmina administration, the residents have recently set up a number of local committees (e.g. the Community Committee for the development of the telephone network and the Committee for the Erection of the J. Piłsudski Monument). These committees are registered by the Secretary of the gmina and they have led to the decision makers taking the populace's wishes into account. The Józef Piłsudski monument, certain road modernisation projects, the construction of a water treatment and supply system and the development of sports buildings at the school have all, to some degree, been aided by increased co-operation between the local administrators and the residents.

While the population is most interested in the administration's efforts to improve the quality of rural life and the development of roads, water supply and sewerage, as yet, the rewards have not been spread evenly. As one resident remarked, "it is getting better and better, the centre already has sewerage, but we live in the

periphery and must wait in the city [Bialystok] there are specialists, there is even a hospital, we are supposed to have an ambulance, but when?"

Europe

Public opinion

In the June referendum on EU accession, 1,238 residents out of an eligible total of 2,767 voted. This represents a turnout of approximately 45 per cent. After discarding nine spoilt ballot papers, only 47 per cent voted in favour of membership; a figure that was thirty per cent lower than that recorded nationally (GUS, 2005b). However, in the months following accession, support for the EU seems to have grown significantly, which gmina officials think can be attributed to the subsidies and other funds that the residents have received. The pro-Europe lobby, which includes the gmina administration, are counting on new investors and are hoping to receive additional funds to enable them to develop the local infrastructure. They also hope that there will be more money for education and that people will get the opportunity to study abroad. In pursuit of this, they are collaborating with NGOs from outside the gmina and other administrative bodies and this informal co-operation is getting stronger.

The European sceptics are obviously against membership, but this is not because they have a general fear of foreigners. What they do worry about are the problems that their eastern neighbours now face, since legally their unrestricted transit rights into Polish territory no longer exist. They also believe that joining the EU will have more bad effects on their community than good ones. One group of residents who are particularly dubious about Europe includes those farmers who are worried about the impact of EU requirements on private agriculture. As the wójt said, "they are afraid that they will be kicked out from the market, the majority are small farms our farmers are strongly attached to their land, there is not much turnover on such farms, they are scared to make changes, there is uncertainty about the very existence of small farms". In order to allay these fears, the gmina is running courses to explain EU agricultural policy to the farmers and also to try to make them more competitive but, as the wójt remarked, "no one is prepared to do book-keeping, to report what fertiliser and sprays they are using"

Attitudes towards the EU and absorptive capacity

The situation in which Polish gminas found themselves after the first of May 2004 did not alarm the officials in Korycin and the local administrative staff were well prepared to work under the new conditions. Gmina office personnel are participating in courses on EU programmes and funds, the legal and administrative changes that accompanied membership, new agro-standards, subsidies to farmers, completing application forms and fulfilling the necessary standards to attract EU funding. Some of this training is financed by the local authority, with the remainder being paid for by the officials themselves. Employees also participate in similar events and projects developed by NGOs and addressed to local administration. In addition, an informal network has come into being which links the Korycin gmina staff working on EU matters with corresponding personnel in other gminas. The officials involved frequently speak several times a day to discuss how particular problems should be solved. Thus, on the administrative front, the gmina appears well placed to absorb EU funds.

European activity in the gmina

The gmina attempts to use all available funding, both from the Polish government and the EU. Officials are well versed in the application process and have been pro-active

in encouraging the local farmers to apply for grants; of the one-thousand farms in the territory, nine hundred prepared applications for direct payments. In the last two years, the authority has made six applications to the SAPARD programme (for saw mills, annuities, forestation, bio-mass boilers, roads, and the development of the water supply station) and one each to PAOW – a rural development programme funded by the Polish government and the World Bank– and PHARE. Of these, only the PHARE application was unsuccessful. Currently, the administration is hoping to receive funding from Poland's main Structural Funds initiatives (ZPORR, SPO ROL and SPO RZL), with internet and electronic book-keeping projects being their priority requests. The gmina posts information concerning on-going EU funded projects on its website.

Summary

Many factors can influence the development of a local community and these may cause either success or stagnation. On the basis of this case study, the main development drivers in Korycin are: local leaders and their administration, a high degree of social activity on the part of the residents, significant co-operation among local producers and high competence of local officials in terms of fundraising. To a certain degree, local businessmen assist the area's development insofar as they provide certain services. However, because they run small companies, they do not generate a significant number of jobs.

The gmina has a good development strategy and there is evidence of significant collaboration between local leaders and the residents. In addition, officials have been successful in securing funding. There is no doubt that the gmina administration is committed to motivate residents to undertake actions that benefit the area and to give due consideration to civic matters. The area does not exhibit the "us and them" culture that is quite common in Polish political life, even at the local level. In general, the residents believe that they have some influence over what is happening in their neighbourhood and they are kept informed of relevant developments. The school rationalisation programme, however, must be taken as an exception to this generalisation. Above all, the administration does not promise what it cannot deliver.

It is clear that local leaders in Korycin enjoy power and high social status; people respect the leaders and they perceive them as trustworthy because of their achievements. Local leaders collaborate with one another and any conflicts that may arise between them tends not to be rooted in differences concerning goals, but in personal conflicts and behaviours that differ from those that used to be generally accepted within the community. Residents have a strong attachment to their community and their land and are conscious of the fact that their forebearers lived in the territory for generations. They like to identify themselves with any actions that benefit their area and this intensifies social integration. The residents also take active part in numerous cultural events that also serve to strengthen inter-personal ties. To conclude, Korycin represents a rare example of endogenous local success that has been achieved by co-operation between the administration and the wider community. The gmina's development is strongly rooted in the area's traditions, which originate both from its natural endowments and its social traditions. The importance of the democratic changes that gave local communities the opportunity to elect the most able individual to head their gmina administrations must also be underlined.

4. Summary and concluding discussion

In certain respects, the case study gminas are quite similar; all are predominately agricultural, all have poorly educated populations and none house any major tourist

attractions. However, two – Łukowa and Korycin – are exhibiting signs of development. On the other hand, no progress is evident in Wąłpielsk. Table 3 presents the summary findings. It is evident that the feeling of community and trust is much lower in Wąłpielsk than in the other two gminas. Two arguments might be advanced to explain this. The first is the influence of the church, insofar as congregations in Wąłpielsk are fragmented, whereas the church is a key element of the social infrastructure in both Łukowa and Korycin.

The second is the role of the wójt in the community. From the interviews conducted, Łukowa appears to have a very popular mayor who is exceptionally pro-active in pursuing measures to improve the quality of life in the gmina, is actively engaged in lobbying for his community and has been successful in securing funds for this purpose. He is also supported by a competent administration. Although Korycin's wójt is also respected by the majority of the gmina's residents and has presided over successful community developments, certain misgivings concerning his management style were expressed. The residents still harbour resentment over his unilateral rationalisation of the area's primary school provision in the face of considerable local opposition, even though the majority are very pleased with the new facility. In addition, his administrators' reluctance to put forward their own ideas for fear of losing their jobs suggests that the wójt's regime is somewhat authoritarian. Likewise, misgivings were expressed about his treatment of the clerks who were in post at the time of his election and whom he subsequently dismissed. In contrast, the wójt in Wąłpielsk is less engaged in development activities and believes that there is little he can do to improve the situation in his gmina. Furthermore, the local residents do not appear to disagree with this insofar as they do not blame the local authority for their troubles, preferring instead to shift the onus onto the generally unfavourable conditions over which he has no control.

The whole of Poland is categorized by the EU as an Objective 1 area and, as such, is eligible for the highest level of support from the Structural Funds. Notwithstanding the Union's commitment to subsidiarity, programmes under these Funds operate at the NUTS 2 (voivodship) level. This means that if gminas are to secure funding, their leaders must convince the regional authorities of the merit of their plans. This might be a difficult task in a situation in which there is an average of more than one hundred and fifty other gminas in the voivodship attempting to do the same. This reinforces the overall conclusion that a pro-active wójt, assisted by competent officials, is a crucial requirement for development.

Table 3 Social capital

Indicators of Social Capital	Łukowa	Wapielsk	Korycin
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3% hold a degree. • 33% have secondary/post-secondary education. • 30% have only basic vocational education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no secondary school in this gmina. • Residents are poorly educated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4% hold a degree. • 25% have a college education. • 50% have no more than primary education.
Employment/Unemployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% tobacco farmers. • One large manufacturer providing holidays but reducing wages. • Unemployment < 3%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66% in small scale agriculture. • No large employers. • Unemployment very high for the young and the poorly educated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66% run farms which are larger than national average. • Seasonal work. • No large employers. • Low unemployment.
Tolerance of diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homogeneous population. • Little migration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurs regarded with suspicion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegal seasonal workers treated well.
Socio-economic advantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosperity due to Protestant work ethic caused by past annexation to Russia. • Over reliance on tobacco industry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25% of residents receive social aid. • Many felt better off under communism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively prosperous. • Ageing population.
Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long tradition of trust. • Recent inequalities eroding this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited as the community is not well integrated. • Fear of crimes committed by young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No fear of crime. • Strong, integrated community.
Civic groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many active groups in existence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited in part by the absence of a strong church. • No social committee or agricultural producers' groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many active groups in existence.

Table 3 (continued) Social capital

Indicators of Social Capital	Łukowa	Wąpielsk	Korycin
Trust in institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wójt highly respected. • Administrators viewed as efficient. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wójt not considered pro-active. • Residents have low expectations of administration. • School teachers very critical of administration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wójt respected by majority. • Wójt criticised for consolidating schools. • Administrators afraid of making suggestions.
Community co-operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration holds public consultations. • Low level of interest in council meetings. • Individuals help each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school community, including parents, very active. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The residents form a close knit community. • Wójt considers family and social ties to be sentimental. • Director of Culture and Sports Centre not respected. She describes residents as inactive and they boycott any event she organises.
Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong influence. • Very high level of church attendance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmented congregation, so church is not a unifying institution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% attend regularly. • The priest is respected, but not considered active due to his age. • The vicar is highly respected and active.

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¹ For a description on the NUTS classification see Ingham *et al.* (2002).

² The evaluation of local authorities involved their *per capita* capital expenditures over the past three years and their investment effort; i.e. the percentage of revenues invested in capital projects. Additional points were awarded for off-budget capital projects, social activities supported by the local authority and for willingness to adhere to budgetary discipline. Local governments with a budget deficit/surplus in excess of 25% were disqualified.

³ (<http://roztocze.net/newsroom.php/14702>)

⁴ These sub-periods correspond to the EU planning periods.

⁵ During the socialist era workers typically received an annual pay bonus equivalent to one months salary. In certain favoured occupations, mining, for example, workers also received a "fourteenth" month salary; i.e. a total bonus equivalent to two months salary.

⁶ Mrs Switelska currently holds two teaching posts and was previously a school Principal. Another interview revealed that the gmina authorities had told her that she should vacate the Principal's position and that in consequence she no longer works to her full potential.

⁷ In addition to the Strategy the following strategic documents were also endorsed: "Plans of Waste Management", "Research into Conditions and Trends of Spatial Management" and the "Long-term Investment Plan".

⁸ Examples of such events include all-Poland days of Strawberries, the Milky Marathon, Days of Korycin and Days of Cheese.