CHAPTER 15
Changes and Consequences Related to the Transformation of Small Villages into Rural Cities in Czechoslovakia

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15.1 INTRODUCTION

Our attention will focus first of all on studying interlinkages—relationships between fields and their arrangement in the landscape, on the one hand, and the agricultural infrastructure on the other. The agricultural infrastructure will be conceived as the system of agricultural settlement, both in terms of the overall system of settlement, including higher settlement structures (small, medium-sized and big towns and cities), and in terms of the elementary units of the agricultural structure (the farm and farm buildings, such as stables, granaries, etc.). We are well aware that this infrastructural concept inclines to sociological methods of investigation. In this case study it will, however, also include the essential aspects of notions and concepts such as the man-made environment, the material environment or anthropo-cenoses—terms mainly used by ecologists.

The relationships between field plots and their arrangement in the landscape will be examined historically (i.e. from the past through the present into the future), as shown in plans and hypotheses. In our analysis of this relationship we proceed from the basic premise that the function of an arbitrary object in society reflects a sovereign form of interrelationship between the components of the unified process of social development, when changes in one are induced by changes in the others. On the basis of our own specific concept of anthro-po-ecology (Hadač et al., 1977; Blažek et al., 1974; Gadač et al., 1978; Gottlieb, 1976) we shall be looking at these relationships not from the point of view of the balanced circulation of matter and energy, but from a point of view that includes the problems of changes in the
informative values of cultural meanings of objects in settlements and in the landscape over longer time intervals. Generally, we are thus concerned with harmonizing and balancing natural cenoses and agro-cenoses with an agricultural infrastructure, not only with regard to the harmony of matter and energy exchange but also on the psychological and aesthetic plane—which is usually expressed by the term ‘a beautiful landscape’, each part of which has its own ‘genius loci’.

15.2 SPECIFIC FEATURES OF AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENTS IN THE CZECH REGIONS

Throughout its historical development the land has been characterized by a great density of settlements—especially settlements of less than a few hundred inhabitants—and thus by small distances between them. In the Czech lands the average distance between settlements is 2.76 km. This distance increases in the easterly direction (i.e. in the direction of Slovakia), so that in western Slovakia it reaches 3.2 km and in eastern Slovakia 3.9 km. The average separation in Slovakia is given at 3.53 km.

The individual villages formed explicit morphological types given by the spatial relations between the dwellings, the farm houses and fields (Figure 15.1). The villages could be compact, with a common, where the dwellings are concentrated around the central village ‘square’ with the church. In these cases the dwellings are relatively close to one another, separated by small gardens. The fields are not adjacent to the dwellings but are mostly scattered and located in different parts of the village environs, and approached by an arrangement of paths. Alternatively the villages could be open and linear, and established along roads. In these cases the distances between the dwellings are much larger than in the previous types. There are also ‘run-based’ villages where the distances between the dwellings again differ. The variety of forms arises not only from the morphological variety of the landscape, but also from cultural and historical tradition. Thus, for instance, in the border areas of eastern Bohemia the villages were mostly established in the eighteenth century by colonization, and they are carbon copies of the villages in the native lands of the colonizers (i.e. in the German regions of Thuringia and Westphalia) (Sommer, 1836; Laurentius Wintera, 1894; Šimák, 1936).

In the individual types of landscape specific vernacular architecture was characteristic not only of dwellings but also of farm houses and outbuildings. In the ponded area of southern Bohemia, where the inhabitants have the sky above their head and its reflection at their feet, there originated the village Baroque house which, in its own original way, transformed the Baroque style in the cities. We find transformed elements of Alpine architecture only in the Šumava area—the south-western border region of Bohemia—and nowhere else. We find the Frankish court only in north-western Bohemia. According to
the results of the latest research on the development of vernacular architecture in agricultural settlements, there are about twenty-five basic types of peasant and village houses, each with a number of sub-types. If we take the layout of the houses as the main criterion, there are about fifty types (Mencl, 1980).

The current state of vernacular architecture in the villages is the result of the historical stratification of values from various periods from the middle ages to the mid-nineteenth century. The basic characteristic of vernacular culture in general was the trend to preserve and conserve the old, not to remove it.

The dominant silhouette in the Czech village was, and very often still is, the church tower—most frequently the spire of the Baroque church which rises above the surrounding trees. This domination of the sacral symbol in the rural settlements in no way corresponds to the significance of religion to the rural population in the past century—with the exception of certain areas which are traditionally religious, the importance of religion has waned, especially in the last 50 years. It is therefore interesting that no social force, no social institution, in the whole pre-socialist period created a material structure with
such a significant symbolic content that would rival the dominant position of
the church. In the cities the situation is completely different. There the growth
of the economic and political might of the burghers is apparent in the building
of the town hall; its imposing structure and artistic composition heralded the
end of the church monopoly in the whole urban composition of the town. This
fact is documented by a great number of town halls in Czech towns from the
Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque periods.

An integral part of the agricultural complex which in the past was a spatial
unit of the dwelling and production unit (the stable, the barn, the granary)
was vegetation: the garden, and solitary trees, especially the popular linden
(lime) tree. Vegetation inside the village layout passed into purposefully
planted and protected green-belts along ways and water-courses, and then
into the broader areas surrounding the village and thence into the whole
landscape. Vegetation was also planted along the field boundaries, etc., in the
village and in its environs—this is one of the main traditional traits of the
landscape of the Czech village.

15.3 MODIFICATIONS IN AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENT BETWEEN
THE MID-NINETEENTH AND MID-TWENTIETH CENTURIES

The development of capitalist production, and the rapid development of
certain branches of industry, made the Czech region at the end of the
nineteenth century (then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire) the Empire’s
industrially most highly advanced region. This fact has key importance, as it
not only significantly influenced the development of agricultural settlement at
the end of the century, but also the basic relationship between the develop-
ment of industry and agriculture in the whole capitalist epoch. Moreover, this
relationship became the basic factor in the changes connected with the
beginning of the socialization of agricultural production and the long-term
reconstruction of the whole settlement network (Table 15.1). Without under-
standing this historical fact it is not possible to understand certain ‘par-
ameters’ of current agricultural large-scale production and the system of
settlement that goes with it.

The upsurge of industrial production was already being reflected in agricul-
tural settlement by the end of the nineteenth century. At the time the first
decline in the population is recorded of small villages with fewer than
200–500 inhabitants. Thus began the process of the depopulation of the rural
areas, which became significant around 1930 and then again after 1945
(Table 15.2). This started the process of concentration. The number of small
settlements decreased; this means that they became the integral components
of higher settlement units, and because of their closeness they often became
architecturally, visually interlinked. They concurrently lost their agricultural
function and acquired other functions (residential, recreational, industrial)
within the framework of the higher category settlement.
The mid-nineteenth century is the dividing line which marks the end of individuality in the construction of agricultural buildings, from building materials which were provided by nature. Since then standard structural forms, easily reproducible, have become common. This trend was especially strong in the vicinity of large cities in the 1920s and 1930s. The social differentiation which took place in the villages, the crystallization of certain social classes (i.e. large landowners, medium landowners and small farmers and hired farm hands), was reflected in the architecture of the agricultural buildings: the estate, the farm, and large and small cottages. Industrial development in the Czech regions resulted in the gradual appearance of a non-agricultural population in the Czech villages in the early twentieth century.

In the mid-twentieth century the non-agricultural element was strongly represented in almost all villages. This meant that in the final stage of capitalist development the Czech village was no longer the exclusive dwelling and production location of the agricultural population. Socially it had become heterogeneous, with a population of farmers, part-time farmers (people with a small acreage of land who leave the village in the winter season to work in industry and building), craftsmen and transport workers (railwaymen), etc. This social heterogeneity of the village corresponds to spatial heterogeneity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Numbers working in the national economy (millions)</th>
<th>Numbers working in agriculture (millions)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>5.545</td>
<td>2.239</td>
<td>40.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>5.577</td>
<td>2.058</td>
<td>36.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>5.683</td>
<td>1.858</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>5.956</td>
<td>1.933</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>6.063</td>
<td>1.468</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>6.477</td>
<td>1.262</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>6.794</td>
<td>1.207</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>6.919</td>
<td>1.192</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>7.033</td>
<td>1.183</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>7.115</td>
<td>1.167</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>7.179</td>
<td>1.097</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>7.254</td>
<td>1.066</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>7.357</td>
<td>1.058</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>7.435</td>
<td>1.033</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>7.476</td>
<td>1.029</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>7.539</td>
<td>1.006</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15.2 Number of localities by size in Czechoslovakia in the period 1921–80

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0–2000</td>
<td>13,991</td>
<td>14,210</td>
<td>13,994</td>
<td>10,916</td>
<td>9,566</td>
<td>6,441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(93.7%)</td>
<td>(93.2%)</td>
<td>(94.5%)</td>
<td>(91.3%)</td>
<td>(90.2%)</td>
<td>(85.8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000–5000</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>757</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4.8%)</td>
<td>(5.2%)</td>
<td>(3.9%)</td>
<td>(6.3%)</td>
<td>(6.8%)</td>
<td>(8.9%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5000–10,000</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1.0%)</td>
<td>(1.0%)</td>
<td>(0.9%)</td>
<td>(1.4%)</td>
<td>(1.6%)</td>
<td>(2.6%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000–20,000</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.4%)</td>
<td>(0.4%)</td>
<td>(0.4%)</td>
<td>(0.6%)</td>
<td>(0.8%)</td>
<td>(1.5%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000–50,000</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.4%)</td>
<td>(0.4%)</td>
<td>(0.4%)</td>
<td>(0.6%)</td>
<td>(0.8%)</td>
<td>(1.5%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;50,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(–%)</td>
<td>(0.1%)</td>
<td>(0.1%)</td>
<td>(0.2%)</td>
<td>(0.4%)</td>
<td>(0.4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>14,925</td>
<td>15,247</td>
<td>14,803</td>
<td>11,963</td>
<td>10,600</td>
<td>7,503</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*According to the Federal Office of Statistics, localities with a population of fewer than 5000 are considered rural. This means that in 1980 there were 7110 such localities, or 94.7% of the total.

Table 15.3  Construction of family houses in the period 1961–79 (see Note 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total numbers of flats</th>
<th>Total in family houses</th>
<th>Flats in family houses (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Numbers of family houses in localities with a population of:</td>
<td>500–1000</td>
<td>1000–2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>86 032</td>
<td>5,635</td>
<td>6,513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>85 221</td>
<td>3,412</td>
<td>5,172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>82 189</td>
<td>2,521</td>
<td>4,468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>77 301</td>
<td>2,312</td>
<td>3,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>77 818</td>
<td>2,196</td>
<td>3,779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>75 526</td>
<td>1,971</td>
<td>3,628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>79 297</td>
<td>1,854</td>
<td>3,491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>86 571</td>
<td>1,766</td>
<td>3,167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>85 656</td>
<td>1,787</td>
<td>3,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>107 653</td>
<td>1,948</td>
<td>4,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>107 380</td>
<td>2,281</td>
<td>4,102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>115 559</td>
<td>2,439</td>
<td>4,103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>118 594</td>
<td>2,371</td>
<td>3,721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>128 988</td>
<td>2,542</td>
<td>3,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>144 678</td>
<td>2,857</td>
<td>3,864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>132 451</td>
<td>2,701</td>
<td>4,243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>134 820</td>
<td>2,757</td>
<td>4,097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>129 330</td>
<td>2,741</td>
<td>4,329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>122 741</td>
<td>2,178</td>
<td>3,546</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
there is no spatial segregation among the rural population. The large or small
cottage of the medium or small farmer stands next to the small cottage of the
industrial worker who commutes to work in the district town, or next to the
house of the railwayman. The situation was different in Slovakia which,
during the pre-war Republic, was an agricultural appendage of the Czech
regions. There, especially in the most fertile areas such as the Rye Island on
the Danube, there existed villages with thousands of inhabitants, purely
agricultural.

The vegetation in the individual villages developed, too. In areas with
intensive development of capitalist large-scale type agriculture, on large fields
with mono-cultures (wheat or sugar-beet), vegetation was radically removed
and the landscape was transformed into a cultural steppe. In the village itself
the state of vegetation declined rapidly.

15.4 REVOLUTIONARY CHANGES TAKING PLACE IN SOCIALIST
AGRICULTURE

The development of agriculture on a socialist basis has led to revolutionary
changes in the whole system of the rural landscape, including the system of
rural settlements. The setting of the areas around the villages—the agricul-
tural landscape—has in the past 30 years (1950–80) changed its appearance,
and has taken on large-scale dimensions with the new organization of the soil
stock (large runs of fields which comply with highly efficient large-scale
 technologies). In the village the traditional linkage of the dwelling area with
the outbuildings (stables, granaries, barns) in one unit has ceased to exist on
large farms and estates. The concentration of agricultural large-scale pro-
duction into a smaller number of larger production or service units enforces
their location on the boundary of the built-up area of the village, or at a
certain distance from it. To start with, the locations of these production and
service units were determined on purely production and economic criteria,
regardless of the ecological consequences and of aesthetic factors.

Great changes in the built-up parts of villages in the past 30 years have
resulted from modernization of former farm buildings, such as barns, stables,
stys and sheds; many have been converted into dwelling areas or into storage
rooms for fruit, tools, etc., or into garages. In addition the villages have been
overpowered by a wave of new construction. (We shall discuss the conse-
quences of this construction later in this study.) For example, of the total
number of flats built in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic in the period
1976–80, flats built in village houses make up around 30% (Table 15.3).

A completely new phenomenon, which was not reckoned with in the initial
planning of the socialist village, was the use of rural areas for recreation by
city dwellers while living in their own second homes. The city dwellers no
longer come to the villages, as they used to in the 1920s and 1930s, as
According to the Federal Office of Statistics, localities with a population of fewer than 5000 are considered rural. This means that in 1980, the total population of these villages was 6,193,358, or 40.5% of the total population.

Sources: as for Table 15.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0–2000</td>
<td>7,398,000</td>
<td>7,363,000</td>
<td>6,026,259</td>
<td>5,740,120</td>
<td>5,399,356</td>
<td>4,182,203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(56.9%)</td>
<td>(52.6%)</td>
<td>(48.8%)</td>
<td>(41.8%)</td>
<td>(37.6%)</td>
<td>(27.4%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000–5000</td>
<td>2,087,000</td>
<td>2,369,000</td>
<td>1,759,824</td>
<td>2,292,611</td>
<td>2,138,264</td>
<td>2,011,155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(16.0%)</td>
<td>(16.9%)</td>
<td>(14.3%)</td>
<td>(16.7%)</td>
<td>(14.9%)</td>
<td>(13.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5000–10,000</td>
<td>1,012,000</td>
<td>1,460,000</td>
<td>974,380</td>
<td>1,208,154</td>
<td>1,218,636</td>
<td>1,320,340</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(7.8%)</td>
<td>(7.5%)</td>
<td>(7.9%)</td>
<td>(8.8%)</td>
<td>(8.5%)</td>
<td>(8.6%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10,000–20,000</td>
<td>774,000</td>
<td>831,000</td>
<td>795,292</td>
<td>989,220</td>
<td>1,124,484</td>
<td>1,651,097</td>
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<td>(5.9%)</td>
<td>(5.9%)</td>
<td>(6.4%)</td>
<td>(7.2%)</td>
<td>(7.8%)</td>
<td>(10.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000–50,000</td>
<td>542,000</td>
<td>775,000</td>
<td>714,186</td>
<td>1,020,626</td>
<td>1,300,513</td>
<td>1,730,101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4.2%)</td>
<td>(5.6%)</td>
<td>(5.8%)</td>
<td>(7.4%)</td>
<td>(9.1%)</td>
<td>(11.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;50,000</td>
<td>1,190,000</td>
<td>1,614,000</td>
<td>2,068,509</td>
<td>2,494,846</td>
<td>3,171,112</td>
<td>4,381,903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(9.2%)</td>
<td>(11.5%)</td>
<td>(16.8%)</td>
<td>(18.1%)</td>
<td>(22.1%)</td>
<td>(28.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals           | 13,003,000| 13,998,000| 12,338,450| 13,745,577| 14,352,365| 15,276,799|

*According to the Federal Office of Statistics, localities with a population of fewer than 5000 are considered rural. This means that in 1980, the total population of these villages was 6,193,358, or 40.5% of the total population.*
holiday-makers spending their holidays in rented rooms: they now come en masse to their own houses which they have converted from what used to be village cottages, mills, granaries, etc., purchased from former farmers. Small village localities began to provide recreational possibilities to all social and age categories of the town population on a very large scale indeed. The recreational function of the rural areas was strengthened, which certainly bore its consequences. We shall say a few words about the social and economic processes that were taking place.

In Czechoslovakia, as in other industrially advanced countries, this century has been marked by a depopulation of the rural areas. In 1930, 67% of the total population of the Czech regions lived in localities with fewer than 5000 inhabitants; by 1970 their numbers had declined to 47%. In Slovakia this process was somewhat slower; the number of inhabitants in such localities had declined from 77% in 1930 to 65% by 1970.

According to the preliminary results of the October 1980 census, only 40% of the total population of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic then lived in localities with a population of fewer than 5000. This basic shift in the demographic structure of the villages was most marked in the smallest localities (Table 15.4). The decrease of the population results from the departure of the younger members and the retirement of the aged. It appeared that these localities would soon disappear altogether. On the other hand, vernacular architecture was in very good condition in all these small settlements, and they had a thick growth of lush and old trees and other vegetation and formed oases of calm, with a healthy, unpolluted atmosphere. So, 25–30 years ago, when the first waves of a demand from the municipal population for recreation in the rural areas was heard, this abandoned building stock was used for the recreation of the urban population, who could purchase the houses and make them their private property (Table 15.5). The demand, however, was not controlled purposefully and sensibly: the open landscape was inundated with chaotic groupings of individual cottages, forming agglomerations of ‘secondary’ settlements whose existence has many

Table 15.5 Numbers of individually owned recreational buildings in Bohemia and in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cottages</th>
<th>Converted agricultural buildings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>23 000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>45 000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>84 000</td>
<td>8 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>132 000</td>
<td>24 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Data from last census not yet processed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
negative consequences for the whole rural area. Construction of these cottage agglomerations threatened to devastate the most beautiful nature areas and landscapes, and so measures had to be taken to control and check the process of construction of cottage colonies. Special legislation enacted in 1971-74 is based inter alia on a system of protective ecological criteria.

Official statistics record the continuous decline of the permanent population in small rural localities, but they do not record the opposite process, i.e. the number of urban inhabitants who spend short or long periods in these settlements. The settlements are pulsating organisms which fill up over the weekends and in the summer holidays. In mountain villages where there are good conditions for winter sports, especially skiing, city dwellers travel to their mountain cottages regularly. It is therefore not illogical to consider these settlements as points of relatively high 'potential urbanization'. Moreover, the urban population which comes regularly is one of the most important vectors of the spread of city behaviour—the city 'life-style'. This is often manifested in very subtle ways: sociologists have noted that in these settlements where the urban 'second-home' population is strongly represented, the trend is more evident towards keeping the village neat and tidy.

The 'second home' is an organic component of the plan for the establishment of a new settlement system whose main trends of development were formulated 25 years ago and will be discussed later in this study.

A major revolutionary measure which affected the very substance of the development of rural settlement was planning. The earlier random development of rural and other settlements was replaced by planning, which was increasingly based on a broad spectrum of scientific information and knowledge. One of the targets of the socialist programme is the elimination of antagonisms between the town and the village.

15.5 THE CHANGING VILLAGE CONCEPT IN THE CZECHOSLOVAK SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

Within the framework of this study it is not possible to present a complete survey of the problems related to the substantial differences between the towns and the villages. We do, however, consider it necessary to mention some factors that have influenced development in an undesirable way.

At one time it was thought that the villages could be made more like the towns by providing similar buildings. Housing in the villages was therefore oriented to the construction of multi-storeyed apartment houses. These, however, were totally unsuitable for the way of life in the villages (with the lack of small storage areas for fruit, potatoes and fuel, and the lack of any space for keeping small animals such as chickens, geese and ducks). What is more, the flats in these houses lacked a large kitchen serving as a living area, and had many other aspects unsuitable for the villagers.
The construction of these apartment houses was mostly only possible on the boundaries of villages—on arable land—and their scale, mass and general appearance often disturbed the whole panorama of the village, the architectural and rural character of the whole landscape. This type of housing construction was therefore considerably restricted, in favour of various types of small family houses. In some cases the practitioners went so far as to demand that the vegetation inside the village setting be replaced by something like city parks. It was thought that country people would not need to keep poultry or grow vegetables, because everything would be supplied by shops, as in the towns. This trend was later described as 'bulldozerism', whose proponents vehemently advocated the speedy elimination and liquidation of small villages and localities, by which operation they wanted to acquire agricultural land and to win the absolute social and political domination of settlements of the municipal type. The opposition between the town and the village concepts was to have been resolved by the liquidation of small localities and the municipalization of bigger villages. Today these views, which were advocated 25–30 years ago, are considered as having been rather sombre.

We need to consider first the very small average distances between settlements, the social heterogeneity of the rural settlements, the total absence of spatial segregation between the farming population and the other social and professional groups living in the village settlement, etc. Among the socialist countries, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the German Democratic Republic have the highest population densities. Czechoslovakia also has one of the highest capital-construction rates per square kilometre, and an accumulation of activities and functions. Like the modern woman, the Czechoslovak landscape continuously faces the problem of how to harmonize often highly contradictory activities and yet remain pretty and attractive. Moreover, Czechoslovakia has one of the lowest acreage rates per inhabitant in Europe (0.42 ha), of which 75% is arable land. The amount of agricultural land is continuously decreasing, raw material resources are limited, and there is a lack of utility and drinking water. All these factors exert pressure on land management.

Czechoslovakia and the GDR are foremost among the socialist countries in the elimination of differences between the towns and the villages (Linhart, 1980). This is manifest in many ways. The earlier economic and social differences between industrially advanced areas and areas that are mainly agrarian (southern Bohemia, the Czech-Moravian Highlands, and certain parts of the less industrially developed Slovakia), have been levelled. It is also very significant that small and medium-sized towns have experienced sweeping development, while excessive growth has been prevented of the three major cities Prague, Brno and Bratislava; depopulation of rural areas has also been limited (Table 15.4).
There have been structural changes in village family life. The number of family members who remain in agriculture is decreasing and the social and professional spectrum of the other members of the family is broadening—they work in industry, the services, transport, etc. This may be interpreted as another channel through which city life 'flows' into the villages.

Working and social living conditions of workers in agriculture and in other production sectors have become more similar. A considerable number of workers in agriculture now have a five-day working week like workers in industry, and some do shift work. Their social and health security, and that of their families and children, do not differ from workers in other sectors. They have the same rights to paid holidays and are given the same opportunities to spend their holidays in recreational centres and in spas. The average wages of workers on state farms are close to those of workers in industry (Table 15.6). The pattern of ownership of consumer durable goods is also similar (Table 15.7).

The statistics must be evaluated taking into account the total cost of living of families living in urban and rural areas. Costs of certain important indicators—such as expenditure on food—are much more favourable for the villagers. This has resulted in the concentration of considerable financial means in the rural areas, which has allowed not only the basic reconstruction of the housing stock but also the construction of new buildings of various

**Table 15.6 Average wages (in Crowns) of workers in the socialist sector of the national economy of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (see Note 2)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workers in industry</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>1450</td>
<td>1590</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>2360</td>
<td>2520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers on state farms</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>1110</td>
<td>1315</td>
<td>1830</td>
<td>2250</td>
<td>2410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers in the building industry (including project design work)</td>
<td>1410</td>
<td>1550</td>
<td>1720</td>
<td>2235</td>
<td>2615</td>
<td>2760</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 15.7 Numbers of certain consumer durable goods in Czech households, according to Social groups, at the end of 1978 (see Note 2)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household</th>
<th>Refrigerator</th>
<th>TV sets</th>
<th>Radios</th>
<th>Motor cars</th>
<th>Second homes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>98.8</td>
<td>132.3</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative farmers</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>102.3</td>
<td>127.1</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other employees</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>95.6</td>
<td>132.9</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
types. In the solution of housing problems the rural areas are still well in advance of the big cities, and this gap is widening.

15.6 FROM PLANNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIALIST VILLAGE TO PLANNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SYSTEM OF SETTLEMENTS

The village ‘space’ has undergone a number of stages during the development of socialist villages. It is not the purpose of this study to make a detailed analysis of each of these stages. When comparing the past with the present we may point to several general differences in the planning of rural settlements. Earlier planning processes proceeded from the one-sided and linear theoretical postulate of the removal of differences between the towns and the villages, conceived in the sense that the villages would be transformed into towns, that the towns would not undergo any major qualitative changes in arrangement, functions or composition, but only rapid quantitative changes.

Reconstruction of the villages was not approached in a systematic manner (a term not even used 25–30 years ago); it was always only related to this or that settlement as an individual unit, and the reconstruction only concerned a certain part, such as the road system. This meant that the plans were not concerned with the whole of a village space, nor were they concerned with the development of the rural settlement in linkage with a higher-level settlement system. Regional plans were only devoted to built-up areas, without any continuity with the other systems in the landscape. Planning was thus oriented to the technical and economic parameters of the individual settlements, little attention being devoted to social laws, even less to psychological and aesthetic considerations, and none at all to ecology.

Almost 20 years ago the concept of a new type of settlement system was started. We have said already that somewhat later, in the period 1971–74, the whole system of ‘secondary settlement’ of summer cottages became its integral component. Its basic theoretical postulate was that the elimination of substantial differences between the towns and the villages was attainable only within the framework of individual agglomerations of settlements, i.e. a new settlement structure which overcomes the traditional concept of the town as well as the traditional concept of the village and of the village space in general. The new settlement structure of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic was therefore based on 19 explicit conurbations:

(1) Prague, Brno, Ostrava, Bratislava and their environs;
(2) conurbations in which the dominant role is played by several close towns, such as Pardubice and Hradec Králové;
(3) strings of towns, such as Chomutov, Klášterec, Kadaň, Most and Teplice in the North Bohemian brown coal basin.
The development of another 35 secondary agglomerations of settlements is envisaged. They will be a decentralized analogy of today's compact town. The individual parts (quarters) of a town have their administrative, commercial, industrial, recreational and residential functions, and a similar division of functions should be formed inside each agglomeration, even though the relations between the individual parts will be looser. Large-scale agriculture will form part of these agglomerations.

The harmonization of all aspects of the development of each part, of all functions within the agglomeration (i.e. production, social activities, etc.), with ecology will not be an easy matter. A very grave limiting factor will be the small acreage of arable land per inhabitant, which limits the use of land for any construction; and so the cores of these agglomerations will take on the character of 'diffused nebulae'. In the residential parts a high density of settlement will have to be enforced.

Thus, further development of settlements traditionally known as villages will become part of a new system. The development of socialist villages will in the future be solved within a certain settlement agglomeration.

From the very beginning the newest concept of settlement proceeded from a three-tier settlement structure which developed gradually with the development of society, production and the settlements themselves. Its main principle—the three-tier character of the settlement system—was preserved.3

The district and regional centres are obvious, but a decision as to what is a local centre and how it is distinguished from other rural settlements which do not have the character of a centre remains in the fore of the attention of administrative bodies and urban planners. This is understandable, because it is here that the changes in the historical settlement structure are most acutely felt. They result from the development of agricultural production and the concentrated build-up of farms and other agricultural installations, such as services, joint supra-enterprise storage areas, silos, etc., and from the development of the 'recreational phenomenon' which has changed the character of many settlements by underlining their recreational character.

A categorization was made of rural settlements with regard to all the factors mentioned, and taking into account the further development of agricultural construction (especially the expansion of existing enterprises) in compliance with the functions of the respective installations. Localities were classified into centres of local importance and localities that do not have the character of a centre. Large-scale animal farms with a great concentration of manpower should be located in the local centres. In the first period of the organization of agricultural production the unified farmers cooperative was linked to one locality. In the present period of the merger of cooperatives this has been overcome. Farmers cooperatives today operate on cadasters comprising two or more localities. There are state farms with more than 50,000 ha which cover the whole district. These facts alone are bound to lead to changes in the functions of the existing settlement structure.
As a result of cooperation and integration processes, some settlements become centres of agricultural production and development and gain in importance, while others lose their importance when development is transferred to another locality. The recreational function of many localities strengthens; this mainly happens in the vicinity of industrial towns and conurbations and in localities outside industrial areas, located in protected nature conservation areas and national parks.

We thus see that some former agricultural settlements grow into rural towns while other villages lose their agricultural importance and gain importance as residential or recreational areas.

This significant functional differentiation of the existing rural settlements within the framework of settlement agglomerations will also determine the approach to their further development. In settlements with a prevalently dwelling function, the following should be given priority:

1. the development of concentrated housing construction, based on new structural and architectural principles, unobtrusively incorporated into the existing area and surrounding landscape;
2. the strengthening of communications with the centres of job opportunities and centres of social life;
3. the building of local leisure centres.

The last point is related to a completely new problem area. It appears that activities which have so far been made possible by existing or newly built cultural houses and centres are not adequate. The view that agricultural work in the open air is so healthy that farm workers have no need for other physical exercise or sport no longer holds. These facts will have to be taken into account in conceiving the content of the activities planned and organized in these cultural centres. It has become evident that they will have to have sports areas and swimming pools.

In settlements with a mainly recreational function, the main effort will be towards doing everything to prevent the emigration of the former inhabitants. It is becoming more and more evident that when settlements have a significantly mono-functional recreational character, outside the weekends they attract antisocial elements and criminal activities. It is also very important to keep the construction of recreational houses and cottages in these villages within certain limits (pressure in this direction is very strong). Public amenities must be built adequately.

In summary, then, we can say that in the socialist development programme the villages have been influenced by many factors and impacts of which we believe the most important are the following:

1. the transition from small-scale to large-scale agricultural production, and with it the industrialization of agricultural production, the influence of
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technical development not only on productivity but on the whole way of thinking;
(2) the rise in the standard of living of workers in agriculture;
(3) the growth of the technical intelligentsia, higher demands on management, and the scientific development of agriculture;
(4) the growth of the size of agricultural enterprises and farms, integration and cooperation processes and their impacts and changes in the settlement structure of rural settlements;
(5) the construction of public amenities, shops, etc., in view of the municipalization of the village whose inhabitants were no longer able to grow and breed their own food;
(6) the high mobility of the rural population, be it commuting to work or for other purposes;
(7) the recreational use of free cottages and small estates in rural areas, by their conversion into recreational cottages;
(8) the construction of cottage colonies in recreational areas, and the construction of public amenities and services.

15.7 OPEN QUESTIONS

15.7.1 Theory of Urbanism

Continuous reconstruction of socialist villages is impossible without clarification of the wide range of possible future intentions for the landscape. One has to visualize the future development of agricultural production and its orientation—mainly the further stages of concentration and specialization, the acreage of large runs, the communications for farm machines of future generations, land improvement measures, etc. Other questions to be considered will be the mining of raw materials—especially mines and quarries of local character, the construction of new sand mines, stone quarries, etc.—the development of road and rail transport, long-distance power supply systems and other limiting factors. Here we shall side with those specialists (mainly urban planners of rural settlements and sociologists oriented to rural problems) who emphasize that this problem area, be it very important, is only part of the question. We are also concerned with the unresolved problem of the overall composition of the settlement structure, including its dominant features. Past historical periods show the typical 'silhouette' of the Czech village with the church dominant, the adjacent parish houses engulfed by trees and flowers, passing into scattered vegetation in the adjoining landscape beyond the gardens. This silhouette had its semantic importance: it was the expression of the power of the Catholic church. Regardless of the waning power of the church and of religion in general, the church remained the natural and logical centre of the layout of the village and of the arrangement of the whole landscape.
What should the silhouette of the socialist village incorporated in the landscape be like? The erection, next to the church, of vast silos, haylage batteries and similar structures has led to very unsatisfactory results. Radical changes in the scale of individual and group structures, in volume, height, layout and area, and their incorporation into the settlement and in the landscape, and their role in the formation of the silhouette of the settlement and panorama, are all problems that are currently being discussed. The exchange of views has so far not yielded any conclusions. There always remain the basic questions: what should the present generation build to stand next to the value represented by the church? and what should be the dominant features of the larger landscape to personify the meaning and aims of a socialist society?

15.7.2 Management

Hitherto the attention devoted to the reconstruction of the spaces of rural settlements has been very small in proportion to its significance. Of the total number of architects and urban planners, only a very negligible minority are devoting their attention to this problem. With few exceptions there are no project design institutes to design village dwellings, and the departments of construction at district national committee level are inundated with routine work and are not oriented to the solution of fundamental questions (Vidláková, 1979; Vidláková et al., 1979). The personnel of these departments include a large number of new graduates and people without adequate qualifications.

As a result the inhabitants of the villages, with adequate financial means in hand, began reconstructing their old houses or building new ones according to old stereotypes and prejudices. Nobody showed them new housing models, particularly the advantages of living in terraced houses which, in certain combinations, could positively influence the outlook of a new village. Most of them saw their ideal in the suburban villa. It is understandable from the sociological point of view why they believed that this was the form that represented all that was new: it pointed to a new way of life, whereas the picturesque vernacular architecture, with its small windows and low ceilings, was for them something of the past, something to be got rid of very quickly. Especially in Slovakia the original log-cabins were, in the period of a rising standard of living, identified with the period of poverty and therefore replaced with ‘villas’. The location of villas and family houses along the communications links, which used to be an advantage, now became very uncomfortable owing to the dense traffic (heavy lorries, and the intensification of public transport). This type of housing construction represented, from the point of view of the whole rural space, a disproportionate diffusion of the settlement into the landscape, while in the centre of the existing villages and localities
there remained unused buildings which lost their raison d'être (such as
granaries, barns or little-used gardens). This purely extensive form of
development has in recent years been halted, but the consequences of this
spontaneous process will bear their negative impacts for a long time to come.

15.7.3 Questions of an Ecological Nature

The best savings of soil and energy will, it appears, be the two decisive factors
influencing the construction of both production units and dwellings. The
whole sphere of legislation (new laws on soil) will enhance trends to save soil
and to increase its biological potential. In place of the diffusion of
settlements—their sprawl into the countryside—it will be necessary to
enforce a more concentrated concept of construction, with a more purposeful
use of space inside the village area, and the use of modern forms of
construction, such as terraced and semi-detached houses. This trend should
be enforced even more vehemently in the case of agricultural production
units, to seek optimal solutions. The ecological problem area thus gains
importance.

In those places where the traditional systems of built-up areas are being
replaced by new housing constructions such as multi-storey complexes, it is
necessary to ensure that combinations of styles do not result in incongruence
and chaos. This has often happened in the past owing to the purely technical
approach to housing construction. An important factor is the aesthetic
harmony of the broad range of traditional materials which used to be used in
the construction of village buildings with the increasing variety of new
building materials. The arguments voiced by ecologists should not be over-
looked, pointing to certain chemical properties of new materials which may
have negative impacts on various life processes (e.g. low chemical stability,
mutagenic characteristics, undesirable electric fields, excessive water absorp-
tion).

Current trends prove that the linkage between agriculture and industry will
deepen, that new agricultural construction will take place especially in those
places where there will be a direct connection with the use of industrial
wastes, waste heat and energy. Let us give one example. When, ten years ago,
a project was launched for a transit gas pipeline to run across Czechoslovakia,
a small circle of specialists began discussing the possible uses of the large
amounts of waste heat which were generated by the operation of turbo-sets in
compressor stations along the route. Two variants were considered: to use this
heat for heating towns and villages, or to use it in agriculture. Calculations
showed that the latter would be more suitable and more advantageous. The
pipeline avoids large towns and new housing estates, and to transfer the heat
would be economical only to a distance of 4–5 km (the costs of transfer to
larger distances rising very rapidly). The distribution of small amounts of this
heat into individual village family houses also proved unfavourable. Under an agreement concluded between the Federal Ministry of Fuels and Power and the three ministries of agriculture (Federal, Czech and Slovak), a broadly conceived plan was drawn up for the use of waste heat from the individual compressor stations for the needs of agriculture. The plan was to be implemented mainly in the years of the 7th five-year plan (1981–85), and possibly in later years. Close to these compressor stations installations and complexes were to be built for a wide variety of purposes, such as hothouses, fodder driers, hop driers, fisheries, duck farms; broiler plants, central storage areas with a controlled atmosphere for seed samples for a genetic bank, etc.

The concept has the form of a closed circuit. Hot water from the compressor and pumping station will not only heat the agricultural units, but will return to the compressor where it will be recycled for heating. We are convinced that in the coming period these principles will find broader application, mainly because various types of industrial wastes discharged into water media contain considerable volumes of wastes which pollute the water and which are in fact a valuable raw material for agricultural production. This mainly concerns the food industry itself: sugar mills, distilleries, slaughter-houses, and the amounts of proteins they discharge as waste.

Finally we should like to mention one completely new problem which arises with the problem of ecological pathways in the landscape: what role will the rural settlements play in the system of these pathways? It should be said at this point that Czech zoology has a long tradition in the research of animal life in big cities. Czech zoologists have proved that with advancing urbanization the composition of animal species in the big cities changes, that some species are replaced by others, but that it would be a mistake to believe that big cities repudiate the whole animal world. The outstanding Czech zoologist, Prof. Julius Komárek, wrote a book more than 40 years ago devoted to animals in a big city: the book has the appropriate title *The Unknown Face of Prague* (1941) and is dedicated to all lovers of the city and to all those who decide its fate—especially to the urban planners and architects—calling on them to remember that 'people are not the only inhabitants of Prague'.

Today we could in an analogous way speak of the unknown face of all settlements, small and large. Scientists have not yet succeeded in describing all manifestations of the ‘urbanization’ of animals, for whom the radical transformation of the whole agricultural landscape made human settlements and their immediate environs the most dangerous refuge. Prof. Komárek writes that even in small rural settlements the situation arose when 'new and previously unobserved animals appear which had previously lived outside human settlements and had been known for their extreme shyness. It is of special interest that this process is not concluded and that we may expect the arrival of further imigrants', and he adds that the phenomenon has not yet been clarified by scientists. In stating this, Prof. Komárek depicted the general
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trend of synathropization which was dramatically accelerated by the total reconstruction of agricultural production and by the introduction of new scales in the landscape. We are thus following up on the ideas of this leading Czech scientist and humanitarian of Schweitzerian provenance. It will be necessary to seek an answer to the question: what should a human settlement look like, considering that it is not inhabited solely by people? This problem, logically following up on the concept of ecological pathways, is still in statu nascendi. The answer to the question forms part of a general reply to the question of how can one rationally cultivate the surrounding world. People are beginning to realize, albeit with difficulties, what the presence in their settlements of animals, plants and nature means for them.

Possible forecasts of future changes may be based on correction based on experience, on a systems analysis approach including simulation, on the existence of loading limits, on the reversibility or irreversibility of observed processes.

Forecasting future changes in the whole rural space (landscape and settlements) is more and more difficult, owing to revolutionary discoveries and technical progress, on the one hand, and energy and ecological barriers on the other. It has become a general phenomenon that processes of development are becoming entangled in an ever greater mesh of contradictory trends, which are often the result of forecasts that did not reveal certain important phenomena which took place in the process of development.

We believe that most plans and forecasts do not show enough respect for ecological ‘parameters’ which enter all events surrounding man. It may be expected that in a short period of time new ecological knowledge will influence a wide range of man’s activities, and thus many production technologies and the entire economic development of society. This fully applies to agricultural production, and with it the related system of rural settlement. No concept of the development of the village designed so far has adequately applied the ecological aspects which science has discovered. This is to a certain extent understandable, because we are concerned with a relatively young problem area. In the rural areas anthropo-ecology has yet to be applied.

Prognoses of the development of the whole network of settlements in the rural landscape up to the year 2000 must be very cautious, and it may be better to specify development in very short intervals (of approximately 5 years) so that new knowledge may be taken into account. This point is exemplified by the waste heat from the gas pipeline mentioned earlier, which has initiated the construction of a whole range of agricultural production units.

Current experience shows that, contrary to previous radical concepts, older settlements will remain preserved in view of the recreational demands that were not correctly estimated before. Small localities and non-prospective
settlements will therefore continue to be used for recreation, and their recreational function is likely to be enhanced. It may be envisaged that the concept of the settlement system with the local settlement centre will be strengthened in localities with a permanent economic function by the construction of public amenities and new housing, mainly in the form of family houses (in compliance with knowledge about the healthy environment). It will probably not be possible to exclude new housing from those settlements that do not serve as local centres but which have a singularly good natural environment.

It may also be expected that the broader environs of big cities will in the near future be exposed to unprecedented urbanization pressure. This phenomenon was recorded in the big cities of the advanced western countries 20–25 years ago. This trend will be caused not only by the strengthening of the ‘recreational phenomenon’, but also by the quality of the environment and of housing in big cities which is not expected to undergo any radical improvement in the near future. From this, and from the desire of the inhabitants of large towns and big cities to spend their weekends in natural surroundings, will stem the increased importance of individual recreation, which will in turn exert increasing pressure and demand on new spaces for the construction of private cottages, recreational houses in the villages and the construction of public and enterprise recreational projects. It may be expected that strengthening pressure on the recreational use of the village and the landscape, together with limited space in the landscape, will give rise to other, higher forms of recreational use and facilities.

In large integrated centres of agricultural, livestock or plant production, or in centres of cooperative associations of agricultural services, there will logically be a further concentration of new housing construction and of public amenities. This assumes the accumulation of certain branches of the food industry which will create the nucleus of small rural cities.

All these speculations are obviously conditioned by a wide range of pre-conditions, including a sufficient supply of fuels and energy. It is, moreover, not yet clear to what extent agriculture will be limited by ecological laws, principles and barriers which may, on the basis of factors which are as yet little known or unknown to us, either confirm the current development or necessitate a different development. The current development of large-scale agricultural production is already coming into conflict with certain ecological principles, although not everyone who deals with such production is aware of this. It will, however, be essential to put large-scale agricultural production and ecological laws into harmony within a relatively short period. The manner and orientation of this process will also specify the answer to the question of the future development of rural settlements as part of our landscape.
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15.8 REFERENCES


Komárek, J. (1941) The Unknown Face of Prague. Čin, Prague.


15.9 NOTES IN THE TEXT

(1) Villages with fewer than 5000 inhabitants are considered as being rural localities. Therefore all family houses built in such localities are considered as being rural, even though it is apparent that the size of the village is not always the criterion which will allow us to judge whether we are actually concerned with a rural village or with a village of municipal character. Next to family houses the unified farmers cooperatives and state farms build multi-storey houses. This is not, however, separately recorded by the Federal Office of Statistics and is thus included in cooperative or enterprise housing construction. We can therefore not give the data separately. The sources of the data in the table are the annual surveys of capital construction published by the Federal Office of Statistics (Department of Investments), Prague.

(2) Tables 15.6 and 15.7 were processed on the basis of data published in the Statistical Yearbook of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, Prague, SNTL, for the individual years.

(3) The new three-stage concept of the development of settlements, the first draft of which was developed after 1960, starts from a three-tier settlement structure:

(i) The lowest tier in the hierarchy of settlement centres are centres of local importance, i.e. selected rural settlements primarily serving workers in agricultural production and workers in the services of these settlements. They
are usually located in the natural centre of the catchment. They satisfy to a certain extent the economic, cultural and social needs of the inhabitants of the respective centre and of the whole catchment. The minimum prospective size of such a centre is a locality with a population of 1500, but the optimum population will be 3000–4000. In industrial agglomerations, industrial production may be represented in the locality.

(ii) The middle link in the three-tier system are centres of district importance. The population of such localities should reach approximately 15,000 inhabitants. Mostly these will be district and former district towns. They will serve as the catchment areas for centres of local importance within a radius of 12–16 km. The population of the whole catchment should be around 50,000 inhabitants. These centres will form the ‘skeleton’ of the whole settlement structure, in which will be concentrated a considerable proportion of production and social installations and facilities forming the required municipal standard.

(iii) The highest link in the three-tier system are the regional centres, with the highest-level public amenities, usually linked to the territorial administrative organization of the state (regional and former regional capitals). They are significant production and social centres with large transport junctions. Their populations should not prospectively be less than 50,000.

All other settlements belong to the extensive and varied category of non-centres. They are divided into three groups:

(a) settlements of relatively permanent importance fulfilling a certain special or explicit economic function of permanent character in the settlement structure;

(b) settlements of temporary importance whose economic function is justified but which cannot be determined as permanent;

(c) settlements with no contemporary significant function and no envisaged future function.

On the basis of Working Instructions for the elaboration of the Draft of the Long-Term Development of Settlement in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic in 1967, the Regional National Committees in the Czech Region drew up a draft selection of centres of local and district importance. In the Czech Socialist Republic they chose 922 centres of local importance and 163 centres of district importance. These figures do not include centres in the Slovak Socialist Republic.