Struggling for peace: understanding Polish-Ukrainian coexistence in southeast Poland (1943-2007)
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Social(ist) engineering

Taming the devils of the Polish Bieszczady *

Introduction

From death and devastation to normalization and restoration—this is the process the Polish Bieszczady lived through just half a century ago. The tempestuous years during and following the Second World War find interesting parallels in a legend explaining the beginning of ancient human presence in this southeastern corner of present-day Poland:

Once upon a time in a long forgotten past devils of all sorts presided over this God forsaken edge of the world. Disturbances, plunder and violations were the order of the day. No wonder that human beings felt no urge to settle here. One day the highest authority in hell sent two special breeds of devils to this peripheral, still nameless, part of the world: Biesy and Czady. Owing to this special reserve of devils the place was called Bieszczady. Since devils cannot do without angels, just as evil cannot do without good, there was an opening for change. But heavenly powers refused to send angels to the Bieszczady reserve. With no heavenly adversaries available, a heads or tail game decided that Biesy would henceforth represent the evil powers and Czady the good powers. Instantly normality was restored and people started to inhabit the valleys and hill slopes of the Bieszczady. They came from all over; from Little Poland, Ruś, Wallachia, Slovakia, and Hungary. This seething mass of people mixed in such a way that it is impossible to tell today where they came from. The truth is that they are all from here, from the place where Biesy and Czady play their plain devilish-heavenly tricks since centuries. Sometimes to the good, sometimes to the bad, for it is close to impossible to please all the people at all times (Potocki 2004: 8).

A similar turning point can be observed following World War II. Between 1940 and 1947 disturbances, plunder and violations were rampant in the villages, forests and mountains of the Bieszczady (present-day southeast Poland, see Map 4.1). Nazi persecutions, partisan warfare and expulsion policies left the area virtually vacant with over 90 percent of the former population dead or gone. While still a ravaged land with almost no human habitation in the late 1940s, during the 1950s and 1960s the Bieszczady became gradually filled with migrants from “half of Europe” as it was popularly called.

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Rather than by heavenly and evil powers, this process was led by the main earthly representative of political power at that time: the Polish socialist state. The way the successive Polish governments proceeded to restore law and order and pushed on to rebuild this ruined and conflict-ridden part of Poland can be read as an example of high-modernist social engineering.

In “Seeing like a State” James Scott (1998: 4) defines high-modernist ideology as “a strong […] version of the self-confidence about scientific and technical progress, the expansion of production, the growing satisfaction of human needs, the mastery of nature (including human nature), and above all, the rational design of social order commensurate with the scientific understanding of natural laws.” While high-modernist ideologies originated in the West as a by-product of unprecedented progress in science and industry during the mid nineteenth century, they found fertile grounds in a world captured by warfare, economic depressions, colonialism and revolutions during the twentieth century. In post-war Poland a new revolutionary political leadership was captivated by the potential of a high-modernist socialist order. The immediate assignments that were planned to alter and improve the human condition in People's Poland were in line with the long-term goals of socialism: the country-wide introduction of social, economic and agrarian reform, the
socialization of the means of production, the rapid advancement of industrialization and urbanization, the education and acculturation of the masses, and last but not least, the promotion of a secular socialist culture.

The introduction of utopian socialist designs in the Bieszczady provided a test case for Poland’s policymakers. Next to socialization and industrialization, the border region also became subject to a massive settlement program. In the socialist scheme of things, the pioneer settlers were crucial for the successful implementation of social change, as it was through their workforce, devotion, and innovation that new modern socialist communities could be created. But settlers arrived in the Bieszczady only hesitantly (their influx peaking in the early 1960s) and in small numbers (thousands of migrants compared to the hundreds of thousands of migrants that settled in the western, newly acquired German territories in 1945) (Jadam 1973). By the late 1960s a reverse trend set in: each year hundreds of new arrivals left the land and farms that they had recently purchased (Biernacka 1974; Jakubowicz 1975). Also, the progress made in the building of a new socialist infrastructure remained far behind that of other parts in the country. In addition, the integration of pioneer settlers into a consolidated and stable society was impeded by the staggering lack of social cohesion among the old and new inhabitants (Biernacka 1974).

Scott (1998) presents an insightful account of the logic behind the failure of some of the great utopian engineering schemes of the twentieth century. He points at the hegemonic planning mentality in high-modernist bureaucracy that ignores the essential features of any real, functioning social order and excludes the crucial role of local knowledge and know-how. “The formal scheme,” Scott (1998: 6) argues, “was parasitic on informal processes that, alone, it could not create or maintain. To the degree that the formal scheme made no allowance for these processes or actually suppressed them, it failed both its beneficiaries and ultimately its designers as well.” The example of the Bieszczady is a Scottian example to the extreme—the socialist scheme that was imposed on this area by Poland’s communist leadership was not only parasitic on informal processes, that is, on the people who with their networks and labor became the main carriers of the new social order, it was also to a very large degree dismissive of the crucial role of local conditions, local needs, and local knowledge. Following Scott’s argument, the Bieszczady project was doomed to fail.

This chapter explores the background of the failure of state engineering in the Bieszczady and addresses two questions: first, what were the conditions that gave rise to the failure of the socialist engineering project, and second, what were the consequences of this failure for relationships at the local level? One thesis put forward in this chapter is that while it is true that Poland’s central leadership made no allowance for informal processes, it was unsuccessful in suppressing them. A second thesis is that the relative weakness of
the Polish state vis-à-vis the local setting was crucial for later developments in the region. Despite the central state’s ability to use coercive power to bring its ideal designs into being, in practice it left plenty of room for local residents to proceed independently from the state-imposed structure. This relatively high degree of autonomy facilitated the formation of a society with a dynamic of its own, that is, one in which power was contested by diverse social groups, and subsequently, one in which the resulting balance of power was self-attained rather than enforced from the outside.

The discussion of socialist engineering in the Bieszczady draws on a number of contemporary studies and publications as well as on anthropological fieldwork carried out by the author in the Komańcza and Cisna region between 1997 and 2007. Two works are central to this chapter: “The formation of new village communities in the Bieszczady” by the Polish ethnographer Maria Biernacka (1974) who carried out substantial empirical research in the 1960s and 1970s, and the volume “Pioneers: memoirs of settlers from the Bieszczady” that was published in 1975 as the outcome of a public essay contest (Jadam 1975). It should be noted that the above publications mirror the normative values and goals the socialist system set for the authors. Notwithstanding the socialist bias, both authors sensitively portrayed the responses of ordinary people to their new social and economic environments.

Patterns of high-modernist planning: the socialization of the countryside

An exceptionally low population density and thousands of hectares of fallow land in the Bieszczady—this was what characterized the Bieszczady in the late 1940s. Table 4.1 reveals the massive demographic impact of warfare and ethnic cleansing in the research area. Between 1921 and 1950 over 90 percent of the population had vanished from the district. In addition, as a result of the Second World War and the subsequent civil war, more than three-quarters of the buildings had been destroyed; of those that remained over half were unfit for habitation.¹ In the eastern most part of the Bieszczady the situation was even more dramatic. As an informant put it, “a gloomy silence” descended on the villages that were left without people and without livestock.

The need to repopulate the emptied area was also understood by the central authorities. They embarked on a settlement campaign (akcja osadnicza) that aimed at three targets: to turn the ethnic balance in an area that until recently had been inhabited by a majority of

Ukrainians; to compensate for the population losses that were suffered during the 1940s; to provide for the necessary human capital to build and sustain a new socialist infrastructure.\(^2\)

Plans for the “polonization” of the Bieszczady were laid out in military and press reports during military Operation Vistula (\emph{Akcja Wisła})—the deportation of all Ukrainian residents from Poland’s southeastern territories between April and August 1947 (Misio 1993; Zajączkowski 2003). A military directive from 22 July 1947 reads: “It is in the interest of the state that the territories on which the operational groups […] are active will not remain desert, but rather on the contrary, that their ‘ polishness’ be cemented and their safety guaranteed. Therefore, concurrent with the deportation [of Ukrainians from the area], the colonization [of the area] has started as well as the repopulation of former Ukrainian villages.”\(^3\)

\begin{table}
\centering
\caption{Depopulation in the research area in southeast Poland 1921-1950}
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Rural district & Population & Population & \% Reduction of & \% Destroyed buildings \\
 & 1921 & 1950 & population & \\
\hline
Komańcza & 16,405 & 1,163 & 93 & 90 \\
Cisna & 6,361 & 138 & 98 & 97 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}


Even though encouraged and supported by state agency, the colonization of the Bieszczady proceeded at a slow rate. It was not before the mid 1970s that the population had reached its peak and that the influx (and outflow) of new settlers began to stabilize. The population data for the Komańcza rural district in Table 4.2 illustrate this trend; by 1988 the total population did not even equal a third of the prewar population. Most settlers originated from poor peasant households of the overpopulated and impoverished villages of southern Poland, but their places of origin could not be traced to just one single geographical location or background. Settlers arrived from different parts of Poland (in particular from the Tatra mountains, the Lublin, Rzeszów and Kraków provinces) and a small number even arrived from outside of Poland (political refugees from Greece and Polish immigrants from the Soviet Ukrainian Republic) (Biernacka 1973, 1974).

\(^{2}\) In postwar Poland the term “Ukrainian” has become a common denominator for a variety of non-Polish ethnic groups that lived in Poland’s southeastern border region and that became subject to communist expulsion and deportation policies between 1944 and 1947 (chapter 3).

Table 4.2 Depopulation and repopulation in the Komańcza rural district 1921-1988

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<tr>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>96</td>
<td>187</td>
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<td>251</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jasiel</td>
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<td>&lt;</td>
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<td>&lt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jawornik</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Komańcza</td>
<td>892</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>843</td>
<td>895</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kulasze</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>217</td>
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<tr>
<td>Łupków (Nowy)</td>
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<td>140</td>
<td>219</td>
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<td>398</td>
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<td>Maniów</td>
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<td>71</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
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<td>84</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>69</td>
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<td>Moszczeniec</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>65</td>
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<td>Osławica</td>
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<td>Preluki</td>
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<tr>
<td>Radoszyce</td>
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<td>46</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rudawka Jaśliska</td>
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<td>&lt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rzepedź</td>
<td>817</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>1,058</td>
<td>1,083</td>
<td>1,404</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smolnik</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>159</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surowicza</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>&lt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Szczawnie</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>444</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turzański</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>332</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wielki Wąsok</td>
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<td>170</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wola Michowa</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wysoczany</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zubeńsko</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>&lt;</td>
<td>&lt;</td>
<td>&lt;</td>
<td>&lt;</td>
<td>&lt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>16,405</td>
<td>1,163</td>
<td>3,283</td>
<td>4,809</td>
<td>4,909</td>
<td>5,313</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: The table includes all villages that are or were located within the geographical boundaries of today’s Komańcza rural district. < Indicates that the village no longer appears in any of the postwar censuses and that the number of people living at this location today is very low, likely less than five persons.


The new settlers all brought with them their distinctive cultures and lifestyles, not unlike depicted in the legend of Biesy and Czady. On one level, the settlement policy had done away with much of the region’s ethnic and religious diversity (after 1947 most
inhabitants were Roman Catholic Poles). On another level, it had contributed to a considerable social and cultural differentiation. Biernacka (1974: 48) suggests that with the advance of years social heterogeneity (różnorodność) even became a dominant feature of the Bieszczady, to the degree that each individual settlement or village community was unique in terms of its settlement history, its socio-economic make-up, the quality of neighborly relations, and the extent of social and cultural integration at the community level.

The social differentiation mentioned by Biernacka (1974) was in stark contrast with the intentions of the state. The region as a whole underwent a gradual transformation into what Scott (1998: 218-9) has termed “state landscapes of control and appropriation”; new social arrangements based on “principles of standardization, central control, and synoptic legibility to the centre” eventually reached the Bieszczady. Hence the standardization of property relations in the villages by means of land reform, the large-scale introduction of State Agricultural Farms (Państwowe Gospodarstwo Rolne, PGR) and of state-sponsored rural institutions and organizations in the area, the huge investment in large engineering projects (such as Poland’s biggest hydro-electrical power plant in Solina), and the establishment of entirely new rural settlements modeled after urban infrastructure planning (the so-called new settlements—wsie nowoosadnicze. New social arrangements were not just implemented in the economic field. Secondary and vocational schools (especially technical and engineering studies)spread rapidly across the region, while literacy and agricultural training courses were organized even in the remotest villages. In addition, numerous social and political organizations and institutions in the villages were established to help promote socialism at the ‘grass-roots level’.

In addition to the development of a socialist infrastructure the Polish state also proceeded to socialize the agricultural sector. The process of socialization went through different phases as it was tightly connected to the political conjunctures in the Polish People’s Republic. In his standard work on the politics of socialist agriculture in Poland, Korbonski (1965) outlines the first fifteen years, when Poland’s agricultural planners introduced the land reform, launched the “class struggle” against the kulaks (large peasants), enforced the collectivization of agriculture, and finally, due to the poor economic performance of the state and collective farms, adopted a reverse policy. Alarmed by the massive protests against food shortages and price increases staged by Poznań workers in June 1956, the central authorities gradually began to invest in the private peasant sector, as it now considered the mechanization of private farms to be the right way to raise the country’s output. To that purpose, prohibitions on the sales of heavy machinery and mechanized equipment to individual peasants were lifted. As a means to induce the peasants to buy such mechanized equipment, as well as other agricultural implements, on a
collective basis the agricultural circles (Spółdzielnia Kółek Rolniczych, SKR) were introduced (Korbonski 1965).

Although all overt attempts to collectivize were dropped, the long-range goals of Poland’s agrarian planners still included the socialization of the private agriculture sector in the form of State Farms on which, as Nagengast (1982: 56) put it, “farm workers would be employees of the State in much the same way as industrial workers”. Since even the agrarian planners realized that this aim was unrealistic in the nearby future, they proceeded to transform peasant agriculture “from a traditional way of life to an occupation” (1982: 56). This trend also affected the occupational structure of the working population in the Bieszczady. Next to peasants who gained a living through full-time farming, there were those who were employed by the State Farms and who practiced specific professions as agricultural workers, accountants, electricians, machine workers or engineers. Opportunities to earn non-farm income increased with the development of new industries in the region. The simultaneous engagement of the villagers in the industrial and agricultural, the private and collective sectors, turned them into so-called peasant-workers. According to Biernacka (1974: 202), this trend, which she termed “dual-employment” (dwuzawodowość), was typical for the whole of the Bieszczady (cf. Hann 1985).
The socialization of agriculture demanded that policy makers gave preferential treatment to State Farms and state sponsored agricultural circles. Between 1966 and 1970 most of the country’s capital input that was claimed by the agricultural sector went to the reorganized State Farms (Nagengast 1982: 53). In the case of the Bieszczady, where labor was in extremely short supply, this preferential treatment entailed the establishment of penal colonies, which brought a large, unskilled captive labor force to the area. From the late 1960s this captive labor force constituted an important source of labor for a number of State Agricultural Farms in the region (Hann 1985; Cegielska 2006). At the same time, the increasing awareness of central planners of the necessity of production growth in the private sector demanded that they also gave preferential treatment to well-equipped peasants with larger farm holdings. Starting in the mid 1950s a less bureaucratic interpretation of the class struggle and a commitment to issues of productivity and economic performance became more and more fashionable. Poland’s agrarian planners now assumed that larger private farms would be more productive than small farms. Their new task, therefore, was to support large farms, and simultaneously, eliminate small, “inefficient” holdings, while the new landless most preferably were to be incorporated into wage labor in industry and State Farms (Nagengast 1982: 57).

The twenty-year development plan (1966-1985) for the Bieszczady displays a similar preference for large-scale specialized farming. It included a sophisticated design for controlled land use. Due to crop production failures in earlier years, the design showed a general preference for livestock production. The new priority of agrarian planners became widely promoted by the district agronomists, the agricultural circles, the village based organizations and the media. Presenting the region as Europe’s biggest potential “tycoon as regards the production of beef, milk, animal skin, wool and cheeses”, a journalist from the newspaper “Life in Warsaw” (Życie Warszawy) suggested that “such an opportunity for the Bieszczady should not be wasted” (Lubak 1974: 1). However, the shift in state priority was detrimental to those peasants who still farmed fewer than five hectares of land, as state institutions would effectively withhold or limit their access to the means of production (such as seed, fertilizers, machinery). In addition, the savings & loan cooperatives gave credits and loans only to those peasants who already had more than five hectares, aspired to enlarge their farms, and had an agricultural education (Nagengast 1982; Hann 1985).

Blemishes on high-modernist planning: the failing Polish state

Resolution no. 271 of the Economic Committee of Council of Ministers of 27 June 1959, popularly called the “Resolution of the Bieszczady”, gave a promising start. Substantial price discounts on the sale of land and building materials (the prices of plots were among
the lowest in Poland), the improvement of veterinary and agricultural facilities, the payment of an additional “Bieszczady premium” for peasants working in the State Farms and cooperatives—all these measures promised a vast potential for those who decided to settle there. The publication of newspaper serials and the broadcasting of radio programs on the region added to its popularity and to its promotion as Poland’s native “Wild West”. The screening of the film *Rancho Texas* in 1959, produced on location, caused a breakthrough. From a marginal, conflict-ridden region during the 1940s, the Bieszczady became very fashionable among all sections of society by the end of the 1950s (Jakubowicz 1975).

However, a decade of development work did not bring the socialist standard of living the designers had hoped for. Of those who arrived in the Bieszczady during the late 1940s only a tiny fraction had survived the first decades of hardship. By 1969, the output of the private and collective sectors continued to fall short of target and vast stretches of excess fallow land were still administered by the State Land Fund. An irreversible shortage of new candidates for settlement, and, at the same time, the massive departure of the first generation of settlers, signaled widespread economic stagnation. Clearly lagging way behind in terms of development, policymakers, journalists and social scientists typically viewed the Bieszczady as a region somehow unfit to be tamed by the civilizing schemes of socialism. Social isolation and hardship had turned the inhabitants of this part of the country into a different—that is, extremely apprehensive and uncooperative—kind of species, a notion which is also voiced by Biernacka (1974: 189):

> The unification of the Bieszczady with the rest of the country’s organism […] is not just a matter of constructing a sound infrastructure, of introducing a reasonable agricultural policy, or of ameliorating the living conditions of the people that currently inhabit the area. It is just as well a matter of breaking through a psychological barrier, a barrier, which prevents the people from full participation in the public life and culture of the whole nation and state.

If a “psychological barrier” had indeed been a major obstacle for the smooth integration of the inhabitants into Poland’s national economy, this barrier was the result and not the cause of the all-inclusive social crisis that had captured the Bieszczady since the late 1950s. While holding on to the notion of a “psychological barrier” Biernacka did what many contemporary observers and policymakers did: blame the victim. Doubting the proficiency of the first generation of rural settlers, from the early 1970s onward governmental expert teams supervised the selection of “capable” (właściwi) candidates for settlement (Biernacka 1974: 107). While the screening of potential candidates clearly aimed at a qualitative change in the performance of the private sector, it could not guarantee their eventual success of setting up a farm in the Bieszczady. Jakubowicz (1975) pointed at a number of structural problems that slowed down the consolidation of peasant
households: the inhospitable natural environment (difficult soils, extreme temperatures); the lack of human control over nature (impermeable bushes, ineradicable weeds, attacks from wolves, wild boars and mice, recurrent plant diseases); the lack of a basic infrastructure (roads, farms, schools, shops and even houses had yet to be built); and last but not least, the heavy debt burden of the fragile farm households. In fact, the debt burden took on increased significance as soon as the first installment payments were due by the late 1960s. "High above the new villages," writes Jakubowicz (1975: 34), "circles the word ‘finances’; it is with great anxiety and agitation that the villagers speak about this topic, which in fact has taken on the role of [the devils] Biesy and Czady with which the villagers scare their own children."

No matter the “capability” of a settler, the low standard of living turned all pioneer settlers into very vulnerable subjects. This vulnerability, in turn, made them highly dependent on their new social environment that could provide them with, and give access to, the necessary means and support. Just how little supportive this new social environment was, is chronicled by Jan Wojdak (1969: 1) in his essay “Bieszczady on its critical point” from February 1969. The fact that it took “twenty damn long years” for the first generation of settlers to reach a decent standard of living inspired him to write about the stagnation of the region’s rural economy. In their late twenties when they settled in the region, now approaching their fifties at the time of writing, the first generation of settlers found themselves at the start of what should have transpired much earlier in their lives: running a profitable farm. Even though this group of pioneer settlers had been aided by the state financially, the state loans (a fraction of what settlers were getting at the time of Wojdak’s writing) were not quite enough to make ends meet—this partly explains their very long lead-time. Wojdak was not able to explicitly criticize the state policies. Still, by demonstrating that a number of problems could have been solved easily, with a fair portion of goodwill and commonsense, he indirectly points at the bureaucratic indolence of the central planners. Let us consider a few issues in some greater detail.

The clearance of fields, most of which had not been cultivated for years, sometimes even for decades, was a first obstacle to be taken by the new owners. Considering the fact that the State Farms were always short of labor and that most individual peasants just had their bare hands, this task became officially assigned to the drainage firms that were active in the area. The drainage firms, however, refused to take up their assignment, due to a lack of time, equipment, and personnel. One firm took its responsibility and came with an alternative solution: it proposed to keep in reserve a quota to pay individual settlers who wanted to do the job themselves. A sound plan, according to Wojdak. Why wait for “who knows how many years” for a mechanized “clearance work-front” to be formed by a number of unqualified drainage firms, asks Wojdak (1969: 8) rhetorically?
A much heard complaint was that it was the peasants themselves who slowed down the process of bringing excess fallow land under cultivation. Wojdak points at a number of other factors that have contributed to the stagnation. First, the lack of trained personnel guiding the real-estate transactions hindered the smooth growth of the private sector. For example, in 1968 the sale of 175 hectares of land to 89 individual peasants in the Lesko district was administered by just one person—an employee from the local Agricultural Bank. Since real-estate transactions were subject to time-consuming procedures (involving visits to the field and piles of paper work) much more could have been done if additional staff had been employed. Second, the credit limit for individual settlers in 1969 was still far too low to cover the basic costs for setting up a farm from scratch, which, according to Wojdak, resulted in a substantial delay of production output and in a wavering interest of the private sector to enlarge the area under cultivation. Third, the reluctance of the district authorities to invest in cooperative machinery equipment rentals (Państwowe Ośrodki Maszynowe, POM’s) in support of the private sector slowed down the overall economic growth in the Bieszczady. Considering the fact that the district councils in all other regions of the Rzeszów province had been stimulating the organization of such cooperative rentals
for years, Wojdak (1969: 8) was very surprised to find that in the Bieszczady the organization of such rentals was "still in its infancy".

In a similar way Jan Niebudek (1971) criticizes the failure of state programs and policies to support individual peasants. Listening to the stories of his respondents, all innovative peasants in their prime years who nonetheless balanced on the verge of bankruptcy, Niebudek starts doubting the assumption held by the district state department of agriculture that young age, will power, perseverance and proficiency are the keys to success. Niebudek illustrates his point with the example of Czesław Narożny, farmer in Chmiel (Ustrzyki Dolne district). “I am not a farmer really—I am still a candidate farmer,” explains Narożny. “What use is 14 ha of land to me when I lack the means to cultivate it?”

His complaint: “Nobody is helping us [farmers] out […] we are simply left to our own resources” (1971: 3). The village-based agricultural circle would not lend him a tractor because it possessed none. The provincial representatives of the association of agricultural circles gave permission to borrow a tractor from a nearby storage, but the district representative of the agricultural circles (Powiatowy Związek Kolek Rolniczych, PZKR) in Ustrzyki Dolne blocked the decision. The reason: the tractor might become damaged. The excuse: the village Chmiel falls under the aegis of the POM and not of the PZKR. Subsequently, Narożny applied for assistance from the POM, but the POM never showed up to plough his fields. The help of the district council (Gromadzka Rada Narodowa, GRN) was limited to a visit of an agronomist during the period in which fertilizers and seeds had to be ordered and bought. “But what is the point of selling fertilizers to me if most of the land that I own lies fallow?”

“Somehow all were in their right,” writes Niebudek (1971: 3). The village agricultural circle had so far been unsuccessful in raising sufficient funds to invest in mechanization. A structural shortage of tractors had hindered the POM to lend Narożny its services. The decision of the PZKR not to risk a damaged tractor was probably based on experience. The GRN had to see to it that its fertilizing policy be carried out properly. According to Niebudek, the irony of the situation is that all the state institutions seem to fail their primary beneficiaries: the peasants. “One of these days,” writes Niebudek, “another person will be leaving Chmiel. And not because he was a bad farmer or because he was lacking will power.” Narożny had dreamt of keeping a modern farm and he had tried hard to make full use of the opportunities the Bieszczady offered him. But at some point his goodwill and perseverance, quoting Niebudek (1971: 3), was “crashed against the wall” of overall “indifference” (obojętność) and “incompetence” (niemożność) from the side of the state and its agencies.
Untamed by nature: disputed hegemony in a pioneer society

For the sake of the design, planners of the new order treated the land that they had subjected to colonization as empty land, thereby ignoring the fact that some Ukrainians and Poles had been able to remain in their villages of birth. Even Biernacka (1974: 78) stresses the indispensable presence of indigenous residents (miejscowi). In her view, the autochthonous population constituted the proverbial “corner stone” in a region that was devastated by war. It was through their continued presence in the area that the indigenous village residents formed a living link with the region’s historical and cultural heritage and that they filled the social and cultural void in the village communities. Biernacka did not explicitly touch upon the issue, but one aspect considerably impacted the colonization process: the residual population filling, not just the cultural and social, but also the political void. Despite their numerical minority in the region, their influence was considerable due to the fact that they lived in the villages that formed the administrative centre within the administrative hierarchy.

The political dominance of the residual population is an important theme in the recollections of pioneer settlers that were published in a volume from 1975 (Jadam 1975). One account, that of Jacek Tylka from the village Dożyca (Sanok district), is especially revealing of the highly problematic relationship between the new arrivals (pionierze), the local authorities (władzy), and the residual population (miejscowi). Tylka, unmarried and in his early twenties, decided to leave the coalmines in Silesia for the Bieszczady after reading positive articles in the newspaper. But when he visited the village Dożyca in November 1959 he was not very charmed of what he saw. The road leading to the village was practically impassable. The village itself was a muddy stretch of land encircled by a graveyard, solid bushes, and thick forest. There were no buildings at all. This depressing nothingness, plus the hostile attitude of the local official who accompanied the visitors during the field trip, put him off at first.

Then, when the road made a turn to Dożyca, secretary [of the local Village People’s Council] Roman Barna pointed at the surrounding fields. “Once these fields were mine,” he told us, or rather Mr. Kodello, because he would not spare us a glance. “But now they are planning to build a border guard post here. How about you,” he addressed the three of us for a change, “you are not planning to buy a farm in Dożyca, are you? To tell you the truth, we and the district [authorities], we only bring in settlers from the west, the people who lived here before the deportation” (Tylka 1975: 136).

Mr. Kodello, the employee of the Agricultural Bank in Sanok who attended the fieldtrip as a consultant, dismissed the remark of the local official with a firm “nonsense”. Adding that “Warsaw will never let this happen” the bank employee considered the subject as closed and enthusiastically pointed at the opportunities for future residency. He said that
the district authorities would soon proceed to build provisional barracks to give shelter
during the first years and that plans were being made to build a new road to the village. In
March 1960 Tylka purchased a piece of land. “I was just about to leave Silesia voluntarily
for a place where soon enough I would meet with a great deal of hostility”, writes Tylka
(1975: 1040). “I thought to myself: ‘Worse luck, but I won’t give in. I certainly won’t let
them get me down. After all, the Bieszczady belongs to Poland and not to some kind of
Ukraine. Those elderly fanatics will soon leave their positions and make place for young
people, who perhaps understand that history cannot be reversed’”.

Tylka’s anxiety about alleged Ukrainian dominance and resentment had an ‘obvious’
reason: the fresh memory of the war that had been fought between soldiers of the Polish
Army and soldiers of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army in the area (1944-1947) and the
successive years of state propaganda depicting Ukrainians as Poland’s worst enemies
(chapter 3). These two facts had impacted the views and attitudes of all Polish citizens,
including those with aspirations to settle in the former combat zone. Biernacka (1974)
found that attitudes such as the one displayed by Tylka were not exceptional. The
widespread Polish apprehensiveness about alleged Ukrainian antagonism is substantiated
by her empirical data. Fear of Ukrainian antagonism occupied place number one in the
questionnaire filled out by her Polish respondents listing the most difficult barriers to
overcome in relationships between the village residents (1974: 104). In addition, Biernacka
(1974: 195) recorded many instances of conflicts between new settlers and indigenous
inhabitants that had their origin in ethnic prejudice, of which the most striking example
was the unjust and unfair treatment of pupils from native families by their Polish teachers.
But besides ethnic prejudice, the extreme distrust between the new Polish settlers and the
residual Ukrainians was caused by social and political factors as well.

A first issue that put pressure on the relationship was the disputed status quo of local
property relations. With the state having confiscated and nationalized the land of the
victims of the post-war expulsion and deportation policies, many new settlers lived in the
houses and worked the fields that formerly had belonged to Ukrainians. When in the wake
of the political liberalization a considerable number of Ukrainians began to return to their
villages of birth, this was much to the anxiety of the Polish settlers. Wojdak (1969: 8)
found that in Bereska (district Lesko) Ukrainian returnees ventured to reclaim their former
properties and, in the process, did not shrink from intimating the new owners. He
recorded the following words spoken by a former Ukrainian proprietor: “So you don’t
want to renounce [my properties] by your own free will? There comes a day when you will
have to depart!” Biernacka (1974: 100) learned from her respondents that in Turzański
(Sanok district) Polish settlers had first resisted the arrival of Ukrainian returnees, but that
later on attempts to oppose their return had been “stifled”. Although Biernacka does not
explain why and how this was done, fact is that a number of Polish villagers eventually
gave in, returned their farms to the former proprietors, and left the village.

A second issue that generated tensions between Poles and Ukrainians was the
competition over resources. In a social environment that was characterized by endemic
shortage this competition was unusually fierce. Competition was not just over basic needs,
such as food, education, employment or housing. Nor was it just over the means of
production, such as state funds, mechanized equipment, building material, seeds or
fertilizers. In a region that was extremely scarcely populated and that, on top of it, suffered
from chronic demographic imbalance (men by far outweighed women), competition was
also over human resources, including labor and female marriage candidates. Tylka’s
account provides another telling example. When Tylka arranged for a marriage with his
fiancée, a (Polish) schoolteacher who lived and worked in the village Komańcza, he found
himself confronted with the secretary of the district council once more. Roman Barna:
“You certainly do not have my consent! First you disturbed my settlement plans, and now
you take away one of our best teachers!” On this Tylka replied: “I am not taking her away,
she will be teaching in Dożyca.” Barna: “Teaching whom, you mean that miserable tribe
of people originating from nobody knows where?” (1975: 145-6).

Since both the residual population and the settler population consisted of Poles as well
as of Ukrainians, the competition was not just between two ethnic groups. As a matter of
fact, competition was between two social groups: the established and the outsiders. Any
person from outside attempting to make appeals to scarce local resources constituted a
potential threat to members of the established communities. Also here the disputed status
quo of local property relations contributed to the apprehensiveness of the established
toward the outsiders. Villagers who had survived the turbulent years between 1944 and
1947 had tried their hands at seizing the lands that were left without owners. The active
involvement of the local population in negotiating the acquisition of vacant properties with
the authorities is documented by the numerous requests sent between 1945 and 1949 to the
Village People’s Councils (Gromadzka Rada Narodowa, GRN), in which local villagers
bade for agricultural plots as well as for farm dwellings. In addition, villagers used the vast
stretches of excess fallow land, popularly termed “nobody’s land” (ziemi niczyjej), to
pasture their cattle or to make hay during the summer season.

The fact that peasants had been allotted land for private use did not mean that they had
been given land titles. This became painfully clear during the land reform, when property
relations were drastically revised. The allocation of land to three designated sectors (the
collective, the state, and the private sector) meant that from a widely available commodity,
land suddenly was made scarce. The demarcation of field boundaries implied that villagers
could no longer use the land that was “nobody’s” in the same way as they had done in the
years before. Local peasants, peasant lessees (typically from the Podhale and Limanowski
districts), as well as village based cooperatives now had to turn to the State Land Fund to lease or buy the land that until then they had been using for free. Also, the nationalization of land and properties that had been left vacant by their previous owners re-opened the dispute on land and property rights among the local residual population.

Like in all rural settings, ‘first’ users of land and property appealed to the morality of the community when they claimed property rights to their former houses and fields. That these informal claims were acknowledged (albeit not always accredited) by most local residents and power holders, demonstrates that moral property rights could substitute effectively for formal property rights. This, in turn, besides being a sign of failing state authority, significantly contributed to a profound sense of insecurity among the village residents. It also created a setting in which secretary Roman Barna was in a position to arbitrarily endorse or turn down the requests of his “very own people” (*swoje*). One field informant Mr. D., member of a Ukrainian family in Komańca who during the 1950s had taken up residence in Turzańsk, recalls the in-group enmity as follows:

There was this Ukrainian called K. […] K. had a wife. It was his second wife. The woman had been married to another man before […] But her former husband was expelled to the western provinces. When [her former] husband returned I lent him my house. Then troubles started […] First, K. made a blockade on the road. He then notified the local authorities about my visitors. I finally was sentenced for building a so-called “Ukraine” […] The judge said “Mr. D., what is the purpose of all this, why are you building a Ukraine in Turzańsk?” I asked him: “What kind of Ukraine?” I was not ashamed of what I was doing. I was not afraid then and I am not afraid now […] They came in large numbers – wagons and carriages full of people. Nine families lived with me at a time. When someone asked me to take him in, I did. Of course I did. What if I had been deported for some kind of unjust reason? I would have cried my whole life. My place is in Komańca and I shall die there. So I was glad to take them in. I am not so wicked as those [other] people in Komańca. Yes, we know each other very well. We—“Slovenians”, “Rusyns” and “great Ukrainians”—this is how they call themselves. Yes, our people and our brethren! No single family from the West was taken in by the people from Komańca. It was such a time.

As is clear from the study of Biernacka (1974) Roman Barna was not alone in trying his political power on outsiders and returnees. She found a similar pattern in three “mixed” villages, that is, villages with a considerable residual population: apprehensive local authorities trying first to intimidate the new arrivals and then, if this did not work, to thwart them in every possible way, meaning that they had to wait months, sometimes even years, for the legalization of their residency status. As most of the new arrivals were poor and had nowhere else to return to, many would “vegetate for years” while waiting for an effective settlement of their case (1974: 77). In a similar way, the 25 families from Dołżyca, of which the majority lived below subsistence level by the mid 1960s, waited for a solution to their situation. Realizing that it would not help his fellow-villagers much if
they waited for “manna from heaven”, Tylka (meanwhile elected village-head) addressed the issue at the local and regional council meetings. The participant officials did not seem to worry at all about the deteriorating situation of the villagers. An official from the Agricultural Department in Sanok even suggested that those who had plans to leave should do so right away: “The second generation of settlers, who will arrive after you, will already have a considerable head start. For them the conditions will be much better” (Tylka 1975: 152).

The fact that people like Roman Barna were not stopped by their superiors from abusing their power, points, among others, at the all-pervasive lack of state control in the region. Local elites could operate independently of the state-imposed structure in securing their own position vis-à-vis the new arrivals. They simply followed their own agenda. Most remarkably their agenda’s were hardly hidden agenda’s. Local elites clearly felt secure enough to play open cards with state representatives from other layers in the political hierarchy. Tylka’s trusted representative, himself the vice-president of the Presidium of the National District Council in Sanok, was very explicit about his factual powerlessness. Although the vice-president gave his support to Tylka both in word and in writing, he confessed that his support would not help him much. “They [the local authorities] have their own agenda, as far as the settlement policy is concerned, and I do not have any influence on it whatsoever.” The vice-president instead prompted Tylka to do as he thought best and to evade official channels. “It is too bad for them [the local authorities] that they do not want to give you a lease-contract. But I can see that you are a smart guy,” he concluded. “A person like you should be doing fine in the Bieszczady” (1975: 138-9).

The pioneering experience: assessments of a socialist engineering project

The uncompromising top-down approach of the socialist planners coincided with the rulers’ overall view that group interests had to be subordinated to the interest of society as a whole, and that societal interest had, in turn, to be subordinated to the interest of socialist construction. During the Third Congress of the Polish Communist Party, held in March 1959, Gomułka asserted that his government could not promise “castles in the air” and that the population could not expect “manna from heaven.” Rather it was necessary “to raise the consciousness of the masses, to develop among the working masses a sense of inseparable unity between their personal fate and that of society, between the interests of individuals and those of the nation.” The complete subordination of society to the needs of the state, according to Ray Taras (1984: 70), was the key societal value prescribed by

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Poland’s communist leadership from the late 1950s, and it was interpreted literally: “Group autonomy was a function of political attitudes adopted, and society was regarded primarily as an agent of economic development”.

Scott’s argument, that high modernist utopian engineering schemes are doomed to fail, has proven its relevance for the case of socialist Poland. The parasitic attitude of the socialist state partly explains the limited success of their designs. The excessive bureaucracy, the repudiation of criticism, and the neglect of local conditions, needs, and expertise implied that systematic malfunctions and deficiencies were easily misunderstood and overlooked and that the discredited, disrespected, and demotivated beneficiaries, besides being distrustful of the planners’ intentions, were inclined to withdraw from the project all together. In the case of the Bieszczady, two other factors have further contributed to the limited success of the socialist designs.

Firstly, the contradictory state policies towards the private peasant sector in the three decades following the Second World War, besides destroying the peasants’ incentives to produce, had largely undermined the peasants’ willingness to contribute to the socialization of the agricultural sector. While the excesses of the collectivization period had left the majority of peasants unconvinced of the benefits of social ownership, the inequities of the later system, favoring peasants with large landholdings, had left peasants with smaller holdings cynical about the intentions of the agrarian planners. Moreover, considering the fact that wealthier peasants were “materially as well or better off than many of their working-class counterparts [...] peasants with smaller holdings attempt to emulate the wealthier”, thus in this way, according to Nagengast (1982: 56), “further eroding State efforts to make the idea of socialization palatable”.

Secondly, Poland’s central leadership was particularly reluctant to invest in rural areas of secondary economic importance. Since both industry and agriculture had been devastated by the war and population losses had been severe, the new leadership had to make investment choices. In an effort to establish a workers’ state, it chose to invest in the development of heavy industry at the expense of agriculture. The state’s reluctance to invest in rural areas especially hit those who settled in the Bieszczady in the first two decades following World War II: the pioneering peasant settlers, seasonal workers, and forest workers, who gave their prime years, labor, and private savings to the rebuilding of a devastated region. Many of them became worn out shortly after their arrival and sank into deep poverty. And yet, any next shift of settlers, replacing the shifts that had already served their turn, had greater chances of surviving the hardships of life in a pioneer society.

The crippling absence of funds to support the settlement of new immigrants resulted in appalling living conditions, but also, in poor administrative management. Such poor administrative management was epitomized by a lack of adequate staff and the absence of
a well-defined overall policy. Policymakers did not anticipate the social, economic, agronomic and judicial consequences of bringing in new settlers to the territory. Problems were solved haphazardly, and new judicial and economic regulations were formulated after the fact, that is, by way of trial-and-error. The lack of competent state employees, as well as the absence of a clear-cut state policy, resulted in a lack of cooperation at all levels of administration. The central, provincial, district and local authorities were at cross-purposes, as every single layer in the political hierarchy followed its own political agenda. In the long term this resulted in the non-fulfillment of plans, even in the rare situation when funds had been made available. It was at this point that, quoting Wojdak (1969), “hopes” for the Bieszczady turned into “disillusion”.

State policy during the 1950s and 1960s was characterized by its inconsistency: on the one hand purposeful and ambitious, on the other hand disorganized and laid-back. In fact, it is hardly an exaggeration to describe the policy with respect to the Bieszczady as laissez-faire, with the state refraining from interference in economic affairs beyond the minimum necessary for the maintenance of peace and property rights. While this attitude can be seen as a deliberate choice by Poland’s socialist planners to exploit and suppress what Scott (1998: 6) has termed “informal processes” at the base of society, it can also be seen as a negative choice that evolved from a position of weakness. It has been shown that the central government lacked the funds, power and knowledge to implement their engineering project or control relationships at the local level. Here again the pioneering settlers came in handy: their sheer presence concealed the impotence of the central government in the area. In fact, it was the new settlers who turned the balance of power and who explored the opportunities and restrictions of—what in popular speech became referred to as—a hostile, hitherto undomesticated and uncivilized area with “untouched soils” (surowe korzenia).

The lack of firm leadership in a particularly incoherent pioneer society was detrimental for the relationships at the community level. It resulted in a fierce struggle for hegemony between diverse social groups that had similar claims to land, housing, labor, and means of production but that held different positions in the local political hierarchy. Lawlessness, reluctant local bureaucrats, intergroup rivalry and intimidation were the order of the day throughout the 1950s and 1960s. It should be noted that this struggle for power was extended to the state organizations and institutions at the village level. This, in turn, significantly reduced their function as vehicles for the state to impose a new social order. One may doubt whether the intensity of this struggle was fully comprehended by the central authorities at that period in time. It is unquestionable, though, that the public awareness of the all-embracing economic stagnation and social instability in the area cast a blot on the political legitimacy of Poland’s central rulers.

Adhering to the idea that society can be designed and re-designed, the Bieszczady with its numerous problems and frictions, besides embodying an inconvenient nuisance, posed a
challenge to contemporary policymakers, journalists and scientists as well. The devil named is the devil tamed—this adage seemed to have been the underlying premise for the countrywide appreciation of the region as an outstanding sociological test-case: by what means can a devastated, underdeveloped and heterogeneous region become economically and socially viable; how can it link up with the social and economic developments in the wider society? Since most Polish authors accepted the idea that the formation of new, viable communities in the Bieszczady could only be attained in socialist conditions, the answers to the above questions tended to demonstrate presupposed progress. Their conclusions, summarized by Chris Hann (1985: 157), are as follows: in the Bieszczady in the socialist period new social relations have come into existence which have permitted the formation of integrated communities in at least two senses, firstly within each rural locality, and secondly at the level of the region. Therefore, as an exponent of her time, the sociologist Biernacka (1974: 199) ends her thorough analysis with the following conclusion:

There are reasons to believe that the villages of the Bieszczady have the difficult pioneering period of the struggle for survival behind them. The new, encompassing integration is based on the continuous progress of education, culture and living conditions of the people. At present, a more integrated society is emerging, in which people are involved in matters concerning the wider region and in which they are able to think and feel in terms of the whole nation and country.

Biernacka justly signaled a turning point that took place right in front of her eyes. She published her book in 1974, at the height of Poland’s industrial and economic booming decade. Four years earlier, in December 1970, Gomulka was replaced by Gierek, who was more successful, at least for half a decade, in fulfilling the plans of welfare and material benefits for the working masses. By 1974, also the Bieszczady began to share in the economic prosperity that had swayed the rest of the country already for a longer period of time. A considerable increase of the standard of living did spur the integration of the diverse social groups. But unlike what contemporary observers and sociologists believed, this “new reality” was not attained because, but despite, of socialist engineering. Modern socialist designs had laid the basis of a society that was not meant to be but that its designers nonetheless helped building: a fragmented society that was characterized by a high level of social heterogeneity, social inequality, social isolation and idiosyncrasy, as well as by a vulnerable social and political equilibrium. The crux of the matter is that this equilibrium, being attained after decades of struggle, was not imposed on society by state agency; it was self-made.
Conclusions

State social(ist) engineering had been effective to the degree that it had largely polonized a formerly Ukrainian area and, at the same time, had laid the foundation of a socialist infrastructure in the villages, which included the establishment of cooperative farms, shops, and agricultural institutions, as well as primary and secondary schools. Nevertheless, it had evidently failed to meet a number of its prime objectives. Firstly, the pioneer settlers, who in the state designs were supposed to shed their individual identities and become part of a new uniform socialist community, never discarded their social, religious, cultural, or geographical backgrounds. On the contrary, the heterogeneous backgrounds of the old and new settlers to a considerable degree continued to affect the way in which they lived and interacted. Secondly, the equal distribution of the means of production was corrupted by the wavering support of state institutions, while the equal distribution of income was dwindled by state policies supporting the wealthier farmers at the cost of the smaller farmers. Thirdly, work force remained in such short supply that vast areas of land remained uncultivated and administered by the State Land Fund and State Forestry. The collective sector as well as the private sector only minimally contributed to the national economy.

The causes of these failures lie, as Scott (1998) rightly suggests, in the excessive bureaucracy, the repudiation of criticism, and the neglect of local conditions, needs, and expertise by the state planners. But other factors have similarly contributed to the limited success of state engineering. First, the scarcity of state resources contributed to the impotence of the state to enforce its own plans and keep its own commitments. Second, indecisive policymaking and inefficient planning by Poland’s central leadership considerably reduced the effectiveness of any state policy. Third, the considerable heterogeneity within and between the village communities in the Bieszczady left the state without uniform support from the local population. All these factors reinforced the overall impotence of the Polish state vis-à-vis the local communities. With a state being unable to offer at least minimal support, the local population was less inclined to endorse and support state policies. Moreover, being unable to mobilize the local population (or even a single social group) for state purposes, the state failed to establish its grip on the local communities. In the absence of state control, local power holders were in a position to fill the political void in the village communities.

The lack of state control had far reaching consequences for relationships at the local level. Lawlessness, reluctant local bureaucrats, intergroup rivalry and hostility resulted from and contributed to the fact that even in the late 1960s the Bieszczady region was still considered a “no-go zone” by Poland’s policymakers. The reputation of the Bieszczady as the devil’s playground and as Poland’s native Wild West touched on a reality that many people felt. As a matter of fact, the pioneer settlers in the Bieszczady lived through similar
‘frontier encounters’ as their counterparts in the American West had lived through a century earlier: the taming of the wilderness for the purpose of civilization; the organization of new and innovative ways to use the land; the risk-taking in the exploration of “virgin soils” and new ways of living; the emergence of new pioneer cultures. The frontier in its American usage, however, suggests that the primary human confrontation is between people and nature. It has been shown that such encounters in the Bieszczady first and foremost involved a confrontation between people. In the pioneer communities a fierce struggle for power and resources ensued between those who had settled first and those who arrived later. In the absence of state control, the weakest had to foot the bill for this struggle of power.

The lack of state control impacted local relationships in still other ways. Having been left to their own resources people depended on each other whether they wanted it or not. This gave all sorts of tensions in the beginning of the colonization process, when resources were slim and needs were high. But with the advance of years and with the increase of welfare for the individual peasant households, hostile dependency gradually gave way to less hostile and less asymmetrical types of relationships. Under the circumstances—low level of state control; high level of local interdependency—people were simply locked into a modus vivendi, despite their divergent interests and backgrounds. This modus vivendi was self-attained and a delicate balance between the diverse social groups was the result. And so, paradoxically, one of the major advantages of Poland’s social engineering in the Bieszczady lies hidden precisely in the failure of the Polish state to subjugate nature and people to absolute state control. The state wanted total control, but it got local self-determination. It is from this self-determination, even though a continued source of nuisance for the central authorities, that local communities draw their strength to this day. Ultimately, the devils Bisy and Czady took over what the socialist state had considered an ideal playground to develop a utopian socialist society.