

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION IN GALICIA.

A SPATIAL UNCONFORMITY

Galicia is one of western Europe's most rural regions as indicated by the fact that nearly seventy per cent of its population live and work on the land and the region is also very poorly connected with the rest of Spain and Portugal ⁽¹⁾ (fig. 1). The rural population is scattered throughout the region into over 30,000 small farm clusters few of which would merit the designation, village or even hamlet ⁽²⁾. Few of these settlements enjoy a basic range of rural provision, such as piped water and sewage, regarded as rudimentary by most of their European counterparts. Around these settlements and their territories, many of which have ancient origins ⁽³⁾, a tightly focussed web of intense semi-autonomous economic and social activity spaces have emerged. Superimposed into this mosaic of activity spaces in the last century was an overlay of political spaces which was uniformly delineated throughout Spain, taking no account of variations in rural settlement size and density, or social and economic organization. These political units referred to as *municipios* were designed to facilitate the state's organisation of local

⁽¹⁾ Banco de Bilbao, *Galicia y su desarrollo económico*. Bilbao, 1967; X. M. Beiras, *Estructura y problemas de la población Gallega*. 1970, La Coruña; and Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, *Nomencladores Provinciales*, La Coruña, Lugo, Orense and Pontevedra, Madrid, 1973.

⁽²⁾ Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (supra) and Flatrès, P. «Hamlet and Village» in *Man and his Habitat*, Edited by R. H. Buchanan, E. Jones and D. McCourt, London, 1971.

⁽³⁾ See for examples, *Historia de Galiza*. Vol. I and II. Buenos Aires. 1962. Edt. R. Otero Predrayo, London, 1971.

government (⁴). Within Spain, the relationship between the local activity spaces and the political spaces has manifested varying degrees of accommodation, or on occasions, discord, as in Galicia.

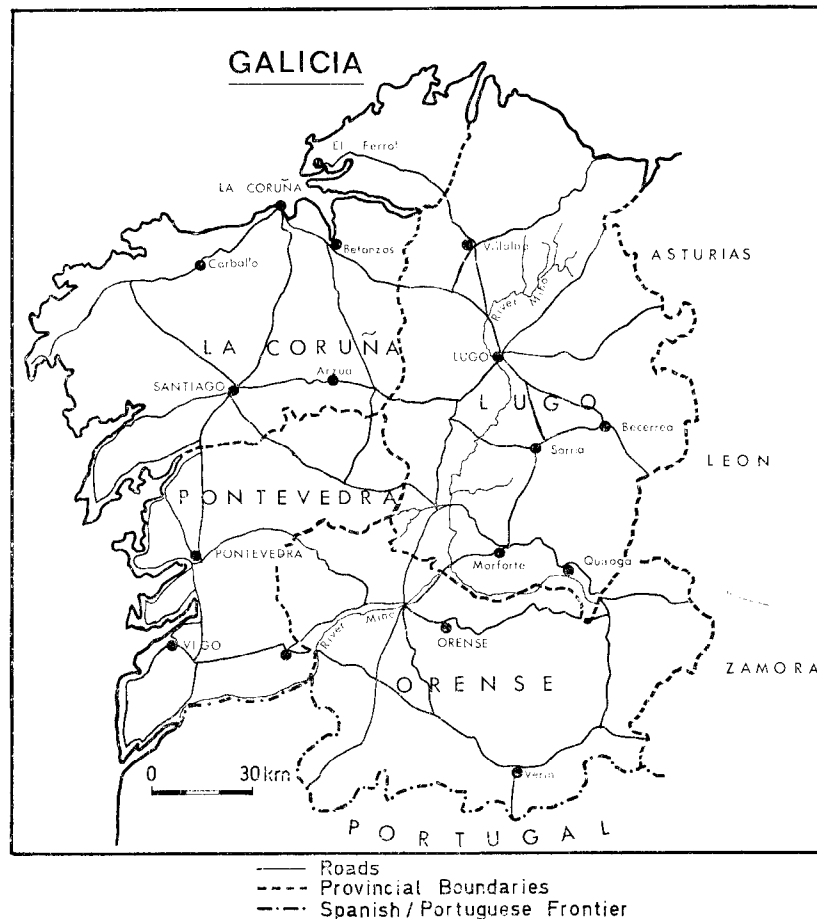


Fig. 1 — Galicia.

The main purpose of this paper is to attempt to examine the relationship between these two sets of spaces and also to explore the nature and some of the results of the interaction

(⁴) VILLAR GRANJEL, D., *El Municipio en Galicia*, Seis Barral, Barcelona, 1919.

between the two sets of spaces. To achieve this aim, it is necessary to identify the fundamental dimensions of political and social territoriality in Galicia, to isolate the factors which have promoted the development of discord between the two sets of spaces, to evaluate the effects of the non-accordance, and finally, to briefly assess the long term implications for the area, if the discord is allowed to persist and strengthen (⁵).

SOJA has outlined some of the salient differences between socio-economic space — (human spatial organization) — and political spatial organization (⁶). The former is the spatial expression of a group or community and it is usually reflected in networks and flows associated with activities and transactions, the latter is instituted by the state and it may or may not possess functional integration. Due to its dynamic character human spatial organization rarely obtains formal acknowledgement from the state; distance decay patterns mark its dimensions rather than formal boundaries. Political space is usually depicted on a map by the presence of formal boundaries. In this way, political space may, soon after its creation, be regarded as a formal region while locally human spatial organization may possess the attributes of a functional region. A measure of the «success» of the grafting of a surface of political spaces might be mirrored by their exhibition of the leading traits of a functional region.

In Spain, as elsewhere in Europe, the differentiation of political space from social space at a local level is a relatively recent phenomenon. A major development took place in this regard in 1833 when the internal political administrative anatomy of the state was radically refurbished (⁷). The creation

(⁵) Data constraints of all kinds have made the realisation of the work's objectives extremely difficult. Survey in the field would appear to be the only remedy where official data does not exist or is highly suspect as most rural statistics are in Spain, with population as an exception.

(⁶) SOJA, E. W., *The Political Organisation of Space*. Commission on College Geographers, Resource Paper No. 8. Association of American Geographers. Washington, 1971.

(⁷) LUCAS LABRADA, A., *Descripción económica del Reino de Galicia*. Reprinted by Galaxia, Vigo, 1971; and VILLAR GRANJEL, D., *El Municipio en Galicia*. 1919.

of this new set of political spaces was aimed at filling a lacuna, as no effective intermediate civil units existed between the parish and the province. These newly created units are

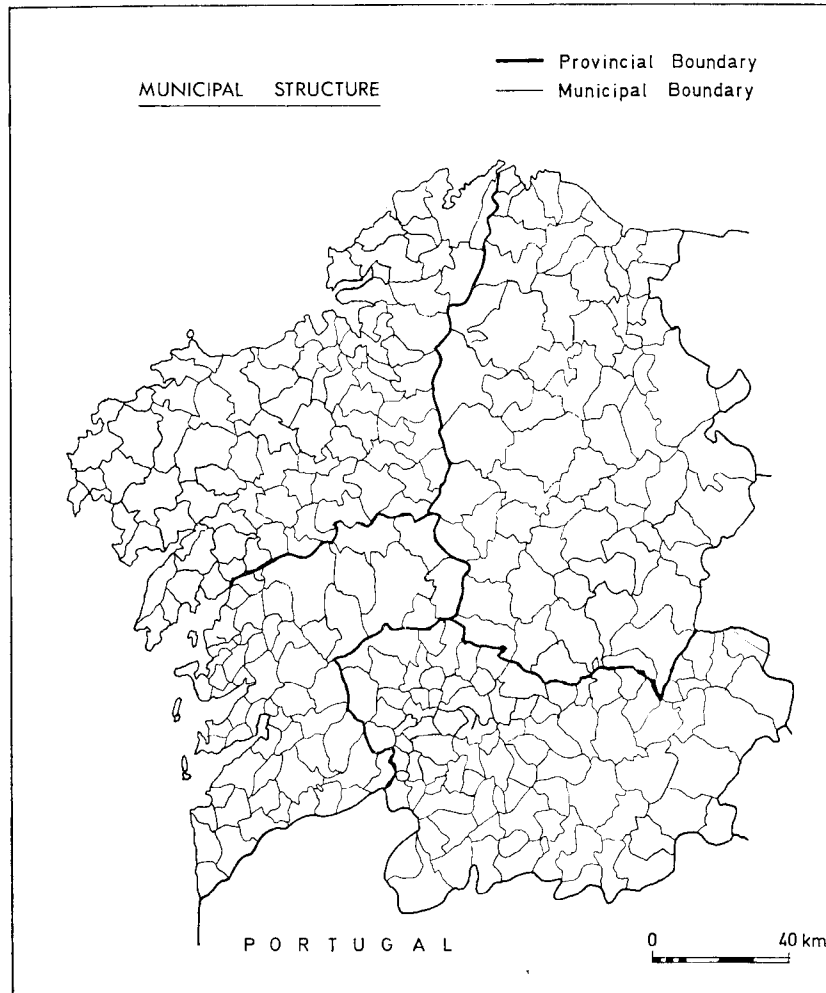


Fig. 2 — Municipal structure.

referred to as *municipios* and altogether 315 of them were delineated in Galicia (fig. 2). The hierarchy of political spaces was now composed of the parish at the bottom, the *municipio*, the province, and finally, the state itself. *Municipios* vary enormously in size and in population totals, the average

number of people per unit was c. 4,000 in 1833 rising to an average of c. 7,000 today ⁽⁸⁾. Since 1833, municipal boundaries have remained solidly inflexible and insensitive to major changes in the social and economic landscape, during the last 144 years ⁽⁹⁾.

Besides the introduction of a new set of political spaces a chief centre required selection for each *municipio* ⁽¹⁰⁾. In the last century Galicia had an extremely weak urban structure: besides the four provincial capitals, namely, La Coruña, Lugo, Orense and Pontevedra; there were scarcely six other settlements worthy of the name town ⁽¹¹⁾. In these circumstances pre-existing parish centres were required to play a new role. These settlements were invariably minute farm clusters seldom exceeding 400 residents and they rarely possessed any significant service functions other than a religious one. Once chosen to act as municipal nuclei these settlements were endowed with the rudiments of an apparatus to effect their new charges and this facilitated their functional differentiation from the remaining settlements in their respective territories. A series of new buildings were erected to accommodate these functions and municipal halls, tax offices, police barracks and sometimes casinos appeared in many of these settlements.

⁽⁸⁾ LUCAS LABRADA, A., *Supra*: and Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas. *Poblaciones de derecho y de hecho de los municipios*. Various issues.

⁽⁹⁾ Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas. *Reseñas Estadísticas* covering the four Galician provinces, published at various dates. These publications include maps of the *municipios* which indicate that no territorial alterations have occurred in the dimensions of the *municipios*. There are some exceptions, however, for example, Bouzas has been included in the *municipio* of Vigo, while Arteixo has been included in the *municipio* of La Coruña.

⁽¹⁰⁾ The formal title allotted to these kinds of settlements is *Cabeza* or simply chief settlement of the *municipio*, e. g. *Cabeza del municipio de Rois*.

⁽¹¹⁾ In the *Nomenclatores* some of the leading chief settlements of a few *municipios* are referred to as *ciudad* (town or city), for example, the settlement of Santa Eugenia de la Ribeira. Most such settlements are too small and possess usually less than a few thousand inhabitants and by European standards they are too small to earn the title «city». Other municipal settlements are classified as *villas* in the *Nomenclatores*; a designation which avers to medieval or earlier origins.

Houses were erected for the mainly intrusive officials and subsequently a number of small retail outlets developed. Even today the drab appearance of these settlements is accounted for by the regularity of building type and design which confers on them as a group an air of monotony rather than distinctiveness.

Initially, this embryonic structure represented the *de facto* establishment of a series of formal regions with feebly developed cores. Success of this policy was perceived by its instigators as being achieved by the emergence of the cores as nodes and their transformation of the formal regions into functional regions aided by the presence of rigid boundaries. In Galicia, since and prior to the overlay of political spaces, significant processes have been at work, and it will be suggested that these, with other factors, have done much to influence the interactions between the two sets of spaces.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND ITS SPACIAL EXPRESSION

The contemporary dimensions of human spatial organisation are exceedingly complex and difficult to measure or represent⁽¹²⁾. Human spatial organisation in Galicia today may be viewed as being influenced in terms of its structure by four composite processes, namely, recent social change and demographic expansion, the development of *minifundismo*⁽¹³⁾, settlement and social organisation and also the role of the parish. Individually and collectively these processes have made a profound contribution to the structure of economic and social space in contemporary rural Galicia.

Social change and demographic expansion. — In the first quarter of the 19th century, nine tenths of Galicia's population lived in rural conditions, few held their own land since it was commonly sublet on short term renewable leases by often

⁽¹²⁾ See SOJA, E. W., *Supra*.

⁽¹³⁾ *Minifundismo* is a composite term popularly applied in Galicia to indicate the predominance in the region of the highly fragmented family owned holding characterized by subsistence agriculture.

absentee landlords⁽¹⁴⁾. The interests of the landowning class were managed by local agents who formed a numerically insignificant but extremely influential class, and they exercised a profound influence on local affairs⁽¹⁵⁾. Throughout the 19th century population growth was extremely rapid so that by the end of the century it had doubled, from one to two million people, in spite of massive and sustained outmigration chiefly to Argentina, Brazil, Cuba and Venezuela⁽¹⁶⁾. Among the major consequences of the remorseless increase of population was continuing sub-divisions of the holdings, especially when leases required to be renewed, so as to accommodate more people on the land, and thereby, increase the prosperity of the agents. Throughout the course of the 19th century the relationship between population and resources became dangerously stretched and the desperate plight of many sectors of society grew to become a national scandal. To alleviate distress, legislation was enacted compelling landlords to release title of their land to the tenants. This development also served to weaken the control of landlords and their agents over local affairs. The transfer of title began in the mid 19th century and the process was completed by the end of the first quarter of this century. For the first time ever many people gained full title to land, which served to dramatically strengthen the relationship between rural society and the land. Yet no other economic or structural change accompanied transfer which might have contributed to ameliorating the relationship between population and resources⁽¹⁷⁾.

As a consequence of the unceasing subdivision of the land, average farm size throughout most of Galicia had

⁽¹⁴⁾ MADRZ, P., *Diccionario geográfico estadístico-histórico de España y sus posesiones de Ultramar*. Madrid 1845-50. LUCAS LABRADA, A., *Supra*. Also, see, S. MARTINEZ RISCO Y MACIAS. *El régimen jurídico de la propiedad territorial en Galicia a través de sus instituciones forales*, Buenos Aires, 1958.

⁽¹⁵⁾ DURAN, J. A., *Historia de caciques, bandos e ideologías en la Galicia no urbana (1910-1914)*, Madrid, 1972.

⁽¹⁶⁾ PAZ ANDRADE, V., *La Marginación de Galicia, Siglo XXI*. Madrid, 1970.

⁽¹⁷⁾ BRENAN, G., *The Spanish Labyrinth*. Cambridge, 1936. Also, GARCIA FERNANDEZ, F., *Organización del Espacio e Economía Rural de la España Atlántica, Siglo XXI*. Madrid, 1975.

actually shrunk to less than one hectare by 1900, and each holding was fragmented into an average of twenty five separate strips (18). The net effect of these tenurial alterations and population growth was to anchor most sections of society even more firmly to the land by imprisoning them within their holdings, and thereby, emphasising the subsistence accent of almost all local economic activities. Thus, today nearly all rural activities manifest a very short distance decay pattern around the settlements and the holdings. Instead of creating an outward focused interdependent economic and social structure, the transfer of title from landlord to tenant, prompted the emergence of an inwardly orientated independent autarkic economic and social fabric.

Minifundismo. — The transformation of a tenant society into one dominated by owner occupation had other significant implications (19). The basic aim of each family now became an unending drive to maintain its name on the land; and to achieve this kind of objective, the foremost goal involved not the production of food surpluses but of enough food for domestic requirements. Thus, the agricultural response to these tenurial changes throughout Galicia was expressed in the emergence of an agricultural system commonly referred to as *minifundismo* (20). The salient agricultural characteristics of this regime are constituted by the predominance of minute and highly fragmented holdings, a complex system of polyculture, with maize, potatoes and a litany of kitchen crops being its main elements, and an almost total reliance on animate energy sources including people and chiefly cattle (21).

(18) Strip or plot. See, for example, L. GARCIA DE OTEYZA. *Explotaciones familiares: Contribución a su estudio en la Provincia de La Coruña*. Servicio Nacional de Concentración, Parcelaria e Ordenación Rural. Madrid, 1963.

(19) GARCIA FERNANDEZ, F., *Organización del Espacio e Economía Rural en la España Atlántica*. Siglo XXI. Madrid, 1975. This work includes an extremely useful bibliography.

(20) GRIGG, D. B., *Population Pressure and Agricultural Change*. Progress in Geography, vol. 8, 1976. London, pp. 133-176.

(21) Few detailed studies have been conducted upon *Minifundismo*. See, for example, O'FLANAGAN P., *Planning for Modernisation in Rural Galicia: The Parish of San Juan de Sardineiro*. Iberian Studies IV. No. 2.

Minifundismo, however, embraces more than an agricultural system, it highlights the general condition of rural society in the region, which is characterised by an autarkical economic existence, extreme material poverty and the fact that these same economic and structural factors have served to isolate many communities from each other, as well as, from the outside world (22). In this sense *minifundismo* can be regarded as a closed system which locally serves to regulate the relationship between population numbers and food resources, with the built in escape value of migration in times of stress or food shortage (23).

Settlement and social organization. — Throughout most of rural Galicia the predominant form of rural settlement is composed of minute farm clusters, too small to earn the title hamlet and not varied enough in functions to merit the title village (24). In this way the rural settlement pattern in Galicia contrasts strongly with most of the remainder of rural Spain (fig. 3), while it manifests close affinities with present and former settlement patterns elsewhere in Atlantic Europe (25). Most of these tiny rural settlements in Galicia are referred

1975, pp. 62-74. Also, see L. GARCIA DE OTEYZA. *Supra*. Commercial viticulture on small holdings has been established at least from medieval time in S. E. Orense in the Valleys of the Limia, Tamega and Miño, as well as, some isolated pockets elsewhere in Galicia. See, A. HUETZ DE LEMPS: *Vignobles et vins du Nord-Ouest de l'Espagne*, Bordeaux, 1967.

(22) Due to data restraints and in the absence of published research it is impossible to measure the degree of subsistence which varies considerably within Galicia. Coastal communities which engage in fishing, among others, are more integrated within a market economy, though they are subject to the vagaries of supply and demand.

(23) GRIGG, D. B., *Supra*; and D. R. STODDARD. *Geography and the Ecological Approach*. Geography, 50. 1965, pp. 242-251.

(24) NIEMER, G., *Tipos de población rural en Galicia*. Estudios Geográficos. VI. 1945, pp. 301-329. P. FLATRÈS, *Hamlet and Village, in Man and his Habitat*. Edited by R. H. Buchanan, E. Jones and D. McCourt. *Supra*.

(25) Little comparative research has been conducted on settlement types in Atlantic Europe. P. FLATRÈS's work *La Géographie Rurale de Quatre Contrées Celtiques. Irlande, Galles, Cornwall & Man*. Rennes, 1951, provides a *résumé* of conditions in the above named regions while H. THORPE's work, *Rural Settlement; Field Studies in the British Isles*. Nelson, Edinburgh. 1964; gives an insight into conditions in Scotland.

to as *aldeas* ⁽²⁶⁾ or *lugares* ⁽²⁷⁾ and a measure of the rurality of Galicia's population is exhibited by the fact that in 1971, there were 33,000 of these kinds of settlements in Galicia

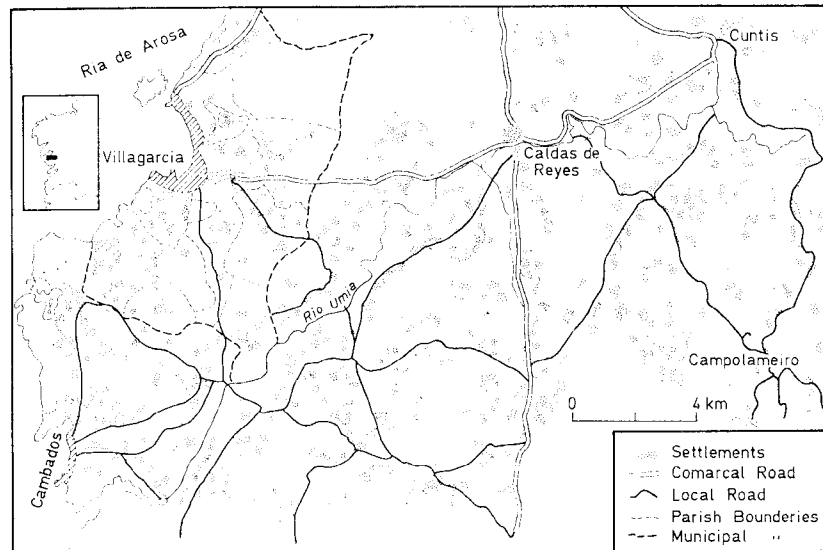


Fig. 3 — The rural habitat. Based on O. S. Map.

For Iberia see, H. LAUTENSACH, *Geografía de España y Portugal* (Spanish Edition), Barcelona, 1967. P. GEORGE, *Paisajes Agrarios*, Moreton, Balbao, 1958 and J. M. HOUSTON, *The Western Mediterranean World: An Introduction to its Regional Landscapes*. Longmans, London, 1964. In Galicia NIEMIER's research already cited, J. M. CASAS TORRES, *Sobre la Geografía Humana de la Ría de Muros y Noya*. Estudios Geográficos, IV, 1943, pp. 559-624; and R. FERRÍN MARTINEZ, *Relaciones entre vivienda y economía en el litoral de la ría de Vigo*. Revista de Economía de Galicia, 19-20, 1961, pp. 18-29. Under the title, *Las Comarcas*, the *Revista de Economía de Galicia* (1959-1968) carries some other useful studies on settlement in Galicia. A cursory examination of these articles contrasting Galicia and Atlantic Europe with other sectors of Iberia, highlights the difference between the minute farm clusters of Galicia matched against the large and so often urban agro-towns of Castille, Extremadura and Andalucía.

⁽²⁶⁾ *Aldea* signifies a village, a hamlet or a small town.

⁽²⁷⁾ *Lugar* means a place, a settlement, a hamlet, a village, or a territory. Popular Spanish and Gallegan settlement nomenclature is as bewildering for its ambivalence as that of most other European countries. See also for official definitions: Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, *Proyecto para la realización de los Censos*, Madrid, 1970.

with an average population of 50 people, ranging from 4 to 536 ⁽²⁸⁾. In Spain, the average population for similarly classified settlements is c. 440 people and it is significant that 51 per cent of these kinds of settlements are located in Galicia which emphasises the fact that they are much more numerous than elsewhere in Spain. It is frequently asserted that the Galician rural settlement structure is a classic example of dispersion ⁽²⁹⁾, but the concept of dispersion usually evokes the single farm homestead and not small clustered settlements which predominate in Galicia ⁽³⁰⁾. In most of rural Galicia human spatial organization is tightly riveted around these settlements, each of which acts as a node for nearly all domestic, agricultural and social activities. Such a role is partially revealed by the spatial regimentation of land use on the holdings which surround these settlements ⁽³¹⁾. Labour intensive enterprises are located close to the settlement such as horticulture and arable enterprises while areas devoted to permanent pasture, woodland and seasonal grazing land are situated at a greater distance from the centre (fig. 4). Most of these activities take place within a 2 km radius of the settlement, whereas studies elsewhere in Spain and Western Europe have indicated that a much more extensive activity space is associated with many rural settlements ⁽³²⁾. In this way the distance decay pattern associated with daily agricultural activities is much more marked in Galicia than in other parts of Spain.

The residents of these small settlements in Galicia may be regarded as a closed corporate community weakly connected with the outside world. These communities carefully control the use of their territory as well as behaviour within, so that

⁽²⁸⁾ Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, *Nomenclatores Provinciales*, La Coruña, Lugo, Orense e Pontevedra, Madrid, 1973.

⁽²⁹⁾ BEIRAS, X. M., *Estructura y problemas de la población Gallega*. La Coruña, 1970.

⁽³⁰⁾ P. FLATRÉS, 1973. *Supra*. See also Figure 3.

⁽³¹⁾ ZIMMERMANN, G. R., *La comarca agrícola de la provincia de Orense en el Noroeste de España*. Revista de Economía de Galicia 44-45, 1965-66, pp. 119-130. Also see, M. ACEVEDO CARBALLÉS, *Estudio geo-económico del Ayuntamiento de Ferreña de Valledouro*. Revista de Economía de Galicia, 64-65, 1968, pp. 12-34.

⁽³²⁾ CHISLHOLM, M., *Rural Settlement and Land Use*. London, 1962.

the intricate link between land and life can be maintained and perpetuated. Such economic and social controls are vested in interfamily cooperation which are constituted by mutual aid groups, which are animated to direct the exploitation of

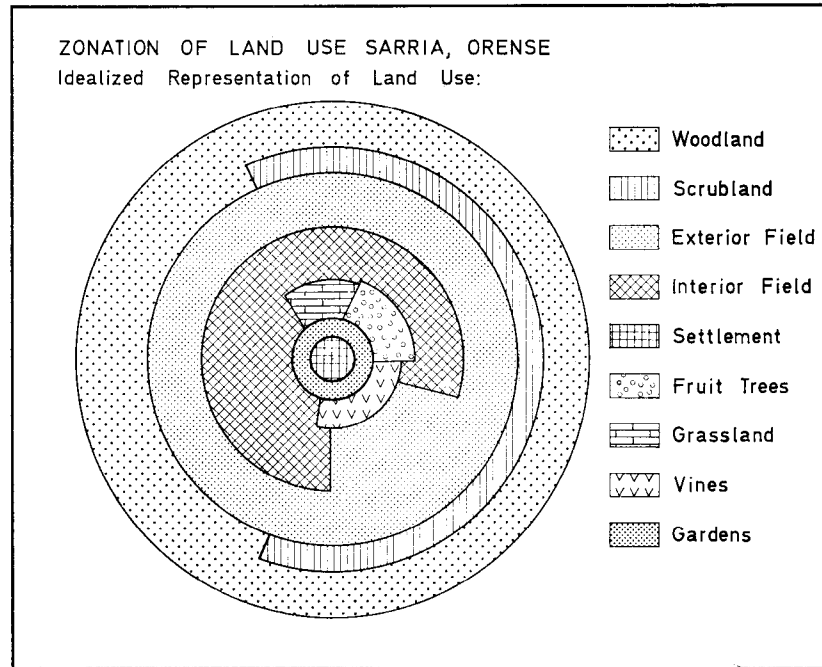


Fig. 4 — Zonation of Land Use Sarria, Orense. After G. R. ZIMMERMAN, 1966-67 and 1968.

internal resources, for example, water, common lands, the maintenance of woods. They also serve to organize seasonal and routine work on the land including sowing and harvesting potatoes and maize, the care of animals, the crewing of fishing boats in coastal areas and the construction and usage of communal utilities, such as, ovens and fountains⁽³³⁾. Mutual aid groups may be instantly mobilised in times of stress or crisis, during times of drought, forest fires, or on occasions of birth, marriage or death. In addition, the annual almanack

⁽³³⁾ TAX FREEMAN, S., *The Social Contract in a Castilian Village*. Chicago, 1970. This provides an Iberian comparative framework.

of each settlement is punctuated by a series of fiestas in which all may participate. These traditional institutions make each settlement a tightly bonded autonomous cell, standing in economic, ritual and symbolic opposition to adjacent settlements⁽³⁴⁾.

Complex traditional norms operate which influence *access* to land by outsiders and *transfer* of land within the community, and some of these norms are epitomised in the traditional codes which govern inheritance and marriage. Although only one member of the family may be legally recognised as the landholder, each member of the household may gain certain rights to it, hence, land rarely reaches the open market following the death of the legally recognised owner. Since the late 1950's temporary male migration has been extremely severe and women must assume increased responsibility and often interfamily cooperation is accordantly strengthened. These and other developments are contributing to, at least, the temporary fortification of traditional institutions which are decaying nearly everywhere else in Europe. Punitive measures such as the exaction of exorbitant dues from unfavoured prospective spouses from other parishes serve also to regulate the gaining of access to land by outsiders⁽³⁵⁾.

The parish and the wider world. — Each of these settlements make part of an enlarged world by its membership of a parish. There are nearly 3,500 parishes in Galicia, and the average number of settlements per parish is nine and the average parochial population is 591⁽³⁶⁾. All parishes have both a secular and a religious identity being recognised by church and state alike. One of the parishes, various settlements acts as its centre, it contains as a rule, a church, a priest's

⁽³⁴⁾ LISON TOLOSANA, C., *Antropología Cultural de Galicia*. Siglo XXI. Madrid, 1971.

⁽³⁵⁾ LISON TOLOSANA, C. *Supra*.

⁽³⁶⁾ Quoted in C. LISON TOLOSANA. *Supra*. See also, *Guía de la Archidiócesis de Santiago de Compostella*. Santiago, 1965. Also see, J. FARIÑA JAMARDO, *A Personalidade da Parroquia Gallega*. Vigo, 1976. Editorial Sept. Also, FARIÑA JAMARDO, J., *La parroquia rural en Galicia*. Madrid, 1977, and CASAS TORRES, J. M. et al., *Galicia: Mapa e indicies de Localización Geográfica de sus Parroquias*. Univ. Santiago, 1976.

house, as well as, a cemetery besides its quota of farmhouses (fig. 5). In Galicia the internal functional integration of parishes varies considerably and in many instances the centres' role may be more symbolic than real as it may be weakened by having poor communications with adjacent settlements or the presence of other settlements in its territory might dilute its primacy. Nevertheless, the magnetism of the parish centre is enhanced by the fact that all the formal events marking the life of each inhabitant takes place here, as also do all the significant events in the ecclesiastical calendar. Mutual aid groups may also be mobilized on a parish basis if the entire parish is threatened by a hazard such as a forest fire. In the last two decades the attraction of many parish centres has been enhanced by the construction of small primary schools and more recently a number of retail outlets have appeared in many of them.

Each parish possesses, often in common with its constituent settlements and their territories an *economic* identity manifested in subsistence farming, a *social* and *moral* identity highlighted in its mutual aid groups and other traditional institutions. It also has a *legal* identity mirrored in the preponderance of owner occupied holdings and common lands, as well as a religious and symbolic profile exhibited by its many religious and secular activities. Recent change brought about by the operation of already specified processes has served even more to localize activities and strengthen inter-family dependance, thereby weakening the development of capitalistic contractual arrangements within and without parishes. Thus, throughout most of rural Galicia society is firmly rooted as shown by the abrupt distance decay element of activities within both *lugar* and/or parish.

Anatomy of societal territoriality. — Three fundamental ingredients of human group territoriality are evident throughout most of rural Galicia⁽³⁷⁾. There is a strong and durable sense of spatial identity focused upon the *lugar* and/or the parish. This is a corporately expressed kind of consciousness in which territory such as common land and resources, such

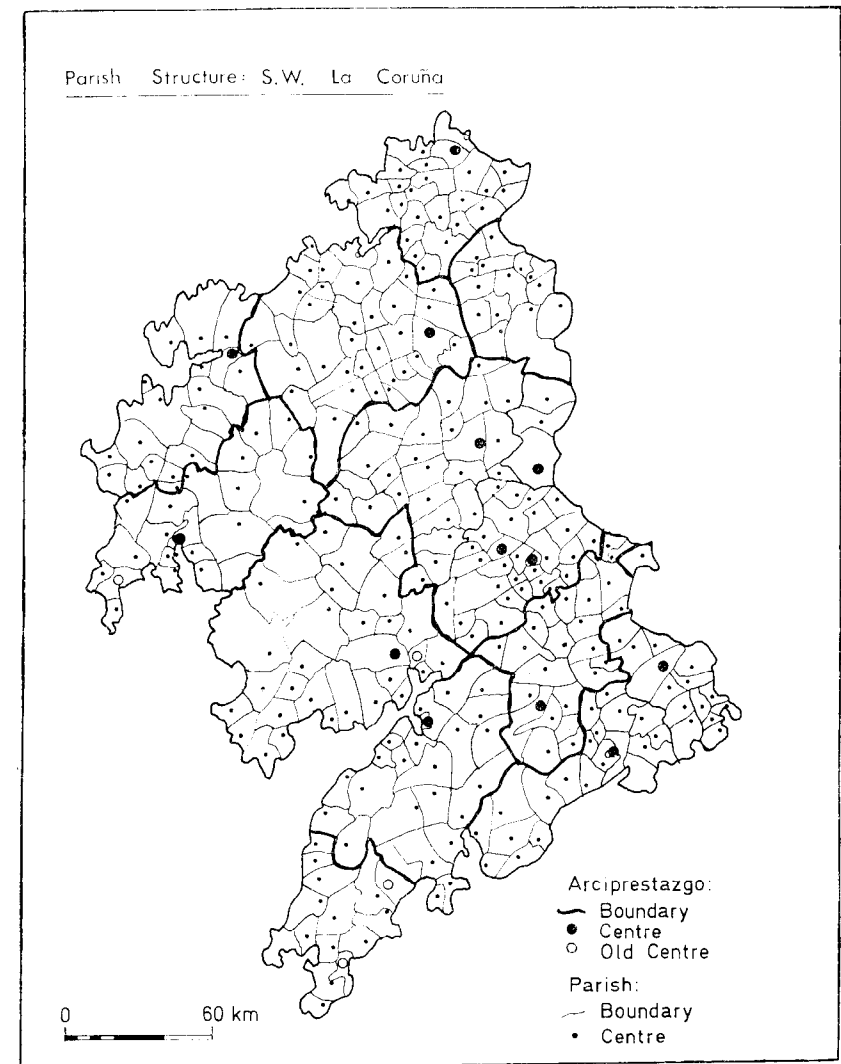


Fig. 5—Parish structure: S. W. La Coruña. Source: Unpublished parish map of the Archidiocese of Santiago. See also CASAS TORRES, J. M. *et al.*, 1976.

⁽³⁷⁾ SOJA, E. W. *Supra*.

as, water and the intertidal zone on the coast may be socially defined. Secondly, there is a well developed kind of exclusiveness evident in the norms and mores controlling behaviour within and keeping intruders at bay. Finally, tradition provides a deep rooted attachment to a particular territory, namely, the family holding, and it is entrenched by the almost total reliance on it supplemented by the internal resources within the *lugar* and/or parish.

INTERACTIONS AND SPACIAL IMPLICATIONS

1. *Political space*. — One hundred and forty years have elapsed since the municipal framework was imposed on Galicia and it has remained utterly inflexible and insensitive to change which has occurred not least in the social organization of space. Among the most significant changes to have taken place have been massive transfers of population, and they have generally involved a shift from upland rural locations to the west and south west where industrial expansion has been most vigorous, in such centres as La Coruña and Vigo⁽³⁸⁾. In most cases movement is not stepped, that is, via municipal centres, but a direct rural to urban transfer and it has even embraced movement of people out of municipal centres. The municipal centres, for reasons to be detailed shortly, have generally failed to act as population growth points and this is highlighted by their inability to serve as relay centres in the migratory process. This flow of people has many important implications, not least in areas where the rural population has been denuded, where it has placed a greater onus on people to cooperate. Thus, it has prompted further closure of mutual aid groups, and concomitantly enfeebled the growth prospects of the municipal centres particularly their capacity to attract industry.

In this century a further range of services has come to be represented in many municipal centres such as a bank,

(38) BEIRAS, X. M. Supra and F. SANCHEZ LOPEZ, *Movimientos Migratorios de Galicia*. Vigo, 1967.

(39) O'FLANAGAN, P., *The Changing Population Structures of Galicia, 1900-1970*. Journal of the Iberian Social Studies Association. Vol. 2, No. 2, Autumn. 1976, p. 61-80.

a garage and a chemist but the appearance of these specialist services has not been accompanied by notable demographic expansion.

For more than a century and a half *Castellano* has been the lingua franca of most municipal settlements, as since their emergence most of the intrusive bureaucrats have been recruited from Castilian speaking sectors of Spain⁽⁴⁰⁾. *Castellano*, however, has failed to spread beyond these settlements to the surrounding rural areas and sharp local language divides on the ground epitomise the gulf between the state and many rural *Gallegos*. In addition many rural *Gallegos* perceive themselves as disadvantaged when conducting transactions with people through a language with which they are not fully conversant. The stigma of poverty and social inferiority is normally attached to those who speak *Gallego*⁽⁴¹⁾. To avoid such kinds of humiliation many *Gallegos* will short circuit municipal centres by travelling to large urban centres for shopping expeditions. In the cities of La Coruña, Lugo, Pontevedra, Orense, Santiago and Vigo, rural *Gallegos* can shroud themselves in anonymity by transacting business in Gallego speaking establishments.

The fishing industry draws many *Gallegos* directly into contact with the regions, leading urban centres. Nearly every rural parish in Galicia provides its quota of labour to the fishing fleet or to onshore processing plants. All fishermen usually obtain a few periods of extended leave annually. A taxi is the normal mode of conveyance from the port to the home area and the immediate families of the fishermen usually avail of such opportunities for a combined shopping and business outing. Once again the municipal centres are avoided and this may help to explain the general absence of higher order retail outlets in the municipal centres. In addition, rural bus services are nearly all focused upon the larger urban

(40) In the absence of a linguistic census these assumptions may only be taken as reasonable postulates. Sustained observation in the field by the author and comments from other workers tend to verify such assertions.

(41) ALONSO MONTERO, X., *Informe-dramatico-sobre la lengua Gallega*. Area longa. Madrid, 1973.

centres weakening again potential access to the municipal centres (42).

Agriculture still remains the major occupation for most Galicians but food surpluses are seldom produced. Cattle and timber constitute the most significant marketable commodities yielded by *minifundismo* and they are only produced at irregular intervals. Most of the timber is sold to cellulose companies on the farms and they also assume responsibility for its transport. Cattle, however, are transported to fairs by their owners (43). In Galicia fairs are still organised much in the same way as 19th century markets in Ireland, that is, at recurring intervals in each catchment area. Many of these fairs take place at parish centres and some at cross road situations. The flows with most such fairs constitute the main extension of the confined economic structure of both rural parish and *lugar*, and it is noteworthy that these networks seldom focus on municipal centres nor are they coincident with municipal boundaries.

Few large state or private companies have located branch offices in municipal centres and hence, people even including municipal residents are obliged to travel long distances to purchase consumer durables ranging from cars to television sets and refrigerators. Landholders who wish to transfer title can only effect such changes in larger centres. Social services are poorly developed — medication, hospitals and consultant facilities, to name but some, are only available in the major urban centres. Locally the attraction of many municipal centres is further weakened by the fact that roads linking them to adjacent settlements are little more than cart tracks. The general absence of industry, social service facilities, specialist activities, a weak tertiary sector and scarcely any offices means that daily commuting to these centres is

(42) Data from bus companies timetables, such as, Castromil, S. A. and Empresa el Celta, S. A.

(43) FRAGUAS y FRAGUAS, A., *Geografía de Galicia*. Santiago, 1953. Also, MIRABLES BEDERA, Ma. R. and J. M. CASAS TORRES, *Distribución espacial, frecuencia, rango y área de influencia de los mercados periódicos de Galicia*. *Geografía*, 2 ser. XV, 1973, pp. 177-206. Milk, an item of increasing economic significance, is collected on the farm by the creameries. See also, D. LEMPS. *Supra*.

non-existent. Moreover, few secondary schools are established in them as secondary education remains the prerogative of the rich and the professional groups.

All of these influences have tended to weaken the role of the municipal centres and, thus, few of them have struck deep roots in rural Galicia. These kinds of setbacks have been reinforced by the fact that many parish centres have acquired recently a skeletal range of retail outlets, such as post offices, garages and grocery stores which are successfully competing for local trade with similar though larger establishments in the municipal centres. Rural social interaction patterns primarily remain beamed upon the *lugar* and its settlements the parish centre, the location of periodic fairs and the provincial capitals, usually avoiding municipal centres, and thereby relegating them to insignificant positions in the social and economic landscape. Elsewhere in Spain, relations between towns and rural areas are more harmonious because fewer smaller sized settlements are in competition with one another and town life has far more ancient roots than in Galicia. But, it could be justifiably argued that the absence of an integrated hierarchy of towns in Galicia is not solely a product of the tensions between society and the state. Other factors including the overwhelming rurality of life in the region riveted around the 30,000 odd clusters, as well as the general absence of well articulated road and rail networks both within the region and linking it with the rest of Iberia, have generally arrested the development of such a hierarchy.

2. *Social space*. — The results of the discord between municipal centres and rural areas are highlighted by the fact that growth of the centres has been arrested and consequently these centres have failed to emerge as central places in functional regions; furthermore, such a conflict has inhibited the development of an integrated hierarchy of urban places in Galicia. Discordance is also visible in many social spatial patterns, for example in their failure to expand so as to include the municipal centres in their realms and in the increased vitality of traditional institutions. Even today, many rural Galicians are convinced that the municipal centres pose the most serious threat locally to their cohesion and stability.

This kind of perception of the municipal role has developed as a consequence of municipal authority encroachments on traditional institutions and individual liberty as assessed from within the community.

Over the years a series of contacts have developed between the municipal centres and the territories over which they statutorily exercise authority; these links, however, have not been reciprocal, nor indeed, have they been conducted on the basis of equal status of the participants involved. The benefits accruing from these contacts has been so one sided that many *Gallegos* view them simply as territorial violations. In the last century, in particular, many tenant farmers were obliged to visit municipal centres on a number of occasions each year so as to expedite their rents and local elites such as priests, doctors and school teachers acted as agents for landlords in their absence⁽⁴⁴⁾. Many farmers were frequently unable to pay their rents and were consequently obliged to enter into debt bondage. Such movements were perceived as degrading experiences by the participants not embarked upon with relish but under duress and a widely felt resentment has grown against the gaining, by intrusive interests, of influence over local life. The general response to such developments was the emergence of a passive and almost unconscious boycott of many municipal, public and private services and this tacit boycott has persisted to the present day.

Rural perception of the *municipio* as a taker rather than a giver as well as an intruder is also deep-seated. Today the *municipio* acts as the basic unit of tax assessment on land while the municipal capital is the address for payment. Thus, travel by farmers to these centres is necessary to defray these levies so as to avoid fines. Presently, the municipal centre is viewed much in the same way as in the last century and discontent is frequently exacerbated by the fact that basic infrastructural facilities, piped water, sewage and telephones in the charge of municipal authorities are only available in municipal centres and not in their constituent settlements.

Direct municipal intervention in local affairs is most assertive on the question of the legal regularization of the

(44) DURAN, J. A. *Supra*.

status of large areas of common lands traditionally exploited jointly by the residents of *lugar* and/or parish. This kind of land frequently referred to as *monte* usually yields, in the form of gorse, the main winter fodder supply for domestic animals, particularly cattle; it is also utilized periodically for sowing cereals and for grazing cattle and therefore, it plays a vital supplementary and sometimes primary role in the local economy⁽⁴⁵⁾. In the view of many municipal authorities this land is derelict or at least under-exploited and with a modest injection of capital it could return a superior economic rent. Municipal authorities have invoked expropriatory powers vested in them, and, in this way have obtained control of large chunks of such lands whose legal title is dubious and have embarked upon ambitious programmes of afforestation. The loss of local control over such lands has important implications in that a vital supportive element is lost and, hence, the economic marginality of many communities is increased while simultaneously their capacity for economic continuity is threatened. Profits from the sale of timber devolve to the municipal authorities and not to their traditional users and such monies have been utilized to finance further afforestation or the improvement of services in municipal centres while neglecting the remaining sectors of many *municipios* which often lack the most rudimentary services. Viewed locally these activities constitute a direct unsolicited encroachment on local life which violates the traditional freedoms of many communities.

The relaxation of political control since 1976 in Spain has witnessed considerable but uncoordinated responses by many communities against the trespass of municipal authorities over the territories of *lugares* and parishes. In the summer and autumn of 1976 nearly 40 per cent of the woods controlled by the municipal authorities were razed by deliberately kindled fires providing the charred landscape with

(45) *Monte* refers in both *Castellano* and *Gallego* to an association of plants rather than to any topographic entity. Plants such as gorse, broom and ferns are its leading elements and they are usually found on sloping or in upland locations. See F. GUITIÁN OJEA, *Estudio Agrobiológico de la provincia de La Coruña*. C. S. I. C. Madrid. 1976.

a revolutionary appearance, symbolizing on the ground the conflict between *municipio* and some of its communities.

Conflict rather than accord have characterised the relationship between political spatial organization and human spatial organisation in Galicia and the kind of disharmony which has emerged has stultified the development of reciprocal relationships between small urban and rural communities. Post war developments have witnessed a marked deterioration of the state/community relationships as evidenced by the deliberate firing of the woods which has been to the detriment of both parties. Until national political structures are modified it is unlikely that any attempt will be made to tackle these intractable regional problems. The future relationship between the two sets of spaces will in part depend upon the decisions of legislators concerning the revamping of the administrative structures of the state as well as influences of such processes as the unceasing tide of rural migration and the growing penetration of influences from large urban centres into rural areas.

CONCLUSION

In retrospect the objectives of Spanish 19th century administrators, so far as Galicia is concerned, must be judged as a relative failure, in the sense that the political organization of space has failed to subsume the economic and social organization of most *Gallegos*. This failure has manifold implications in relation to the planned modernization of the region. Among some of the outstanding implications are, for example, all the difficulties associated with the absence of an integrated hierarchy of central places and the kind of suspicion felt by many *Gallegos* concerning the role of the municipal centres. Locally, rural-town interactions and transactions are weakly developed and hence, the stimulus for commercial farming to grow is lessened, while simultaneously, few opportunities exist to dismantle the nexus of *minifundismo*. Furthermore, if the gulf between large sectors of rural society and the state including its various institutions remains wide, a condition which some local vested interests aspire to main-

taining, seeds of further social and economic disruptions are being nurtured.

It is necessary that policy makers should be aware that even today the entire *raison d'être* of the social organization of space stands in relative functional opposition to the political organization of space which has been devised by the state to mould the fabric of society, territory and resources in its own interests.

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RÉSUMÉ

L'Organisation sociale et politique de la Galice et ses contradictions spatiales. En beaucoup de régions d'Europe occidentale, surtout au long du littoral atlantique et particulièrement en Espagne et au Portugal, l'implantation territoriale des sociétés s'est développée sans rupture pendant au moins deux mille ans. Dans les régions de ce type, les communautés rurales ont une conscience précise et aigüe de leur patrimoine tant terrestre que maritime. Au cours du 19^{ème} siècle le développement de l'Etat à l'échelle nationale et la consolidation de la colonisation d'outre-mer ont provoqué un renforcement de la main-mise de l'Etat sur les décisions au niveau local. C'est souvent par l'établissement d'une catégorie supérieure de petites divisions administratives que l'Etat s'implanta localement au sens politique. En certaines régions, les divisions sociales et politiques ont fusionné en espaces fonctionnels, mais ailleurs, par exemple en Galice, l'harmonisation ne s'est pas faite.

La création en 1833 d'une catégorie nouvelle de divisions administratives appelées *municipios* (fig. 2) exprime une tentative de l'Etat pour s'implanter davantage dans l'administration locale. Ces espaces municipaux, de type politique, furent imposés à l'Espagne, sans tenir compte de la grande diversité de structures sociales et économiques qui se manifestent à travers le pays. A la différence de la plupart des autres régions, l'organisation de l'espace rural en Galice est fortement conditionnée par la très grande densité de la population rurale et par un modèle de peuplement rural extrêmement resserré, qui fait penser à certaines régions de l'Irlande avant la grande famine. Ce type de peuplement, illustré par la figure 3, qui montre l'habitat rural dans le *municipio* de Villagarcía de Arca et dans la vallée inférieure de l'Umia, est assez répandu. Dans cette zone, il y a en moyenne neuf agglomérations par paroisse et treize paroisses par *municipio*. C'est autour de chacune de ces agglomérations que des espaces d'activités polarisés et semi-autonomes se sont développés, ce qui se reflète dans l'organisation de l'usage des terres qui les entourent (fig. 4).

La dimension des nouveaux espaces politiques, la faible structure urbaine de la région et le fait que la Galice était traitée par le gouver-

nement plus comme une colonie que comme une partie intégrante de l'Espagne permettent de comprendre l'échec de la fusion des espaces socio-économique et politique. Dans cette société rurale aux nombreuses institutions traditionnelles, l'organisation socio-économique étroitement localisée militait aussi contre l'acceptation générale des attributs fonctionnels de l'espace politique. Cet article décrit en outre quelques-unes des lignes de tension qui se sont développés entre la société et l'Etat dans cette région, ainsi que leurs conséquences, par exemple les forêts volontairement incendiées qui font partout du paysage le témoin visible de ce conflit. En conclusion, l'absence d'harmonie entre l'organisation sociale et économique et les structures politico-spatiales de la Galice est un obstacle important à sa modernisation.

SUMMARY

Social and political organization in Galicia. A spatial unconformity.

In many areas of Western Europe, and especially along its Atlantic fringes, notably in Spain and Portugal, societal territoriality has evolved in almost an unbroken continuum for at least two thousand years. In these kinds of regions, rural communities usually possess an acutely refined awareness of their patrimony, both land and sea. During the 19th century the growth of the nation state and the consolidation of colonialism overseas witnessed a general strengthening of the state's grip on local decision making. This was often accomplished by the establishment of an overlay of minor administrative divisions which endowed the state with a local territoriality in a political sense. In some areas local social and political territoriality fused into functional spaces, but in others, such as Galicia, harmonization did not transpire.

The superimposition of a surface of administrative divisions referred to as *municipios* in 1833 and shown by figure 2 represented an attempt by the state to involve itself more actively in local administration. This kind of municipal surface referred to as «political space» was grafted upon Spain taking scarcely any cognisance of the massive diversity of social and economic structures and their expressions throughout that country. Unlike many other parts of Spain, rural territoriality in Galicia is strongly conditioned by extremely high rural population densities and an extraordinarily cluttered rural settlement pattern, reminiscent of parts of pre-famine Ireland. This kind of settlement pattern, illustrated by figure 3 depicting the rural habitat in the *municipio* of Villagarcia de Arosa, and the lower Umia valley, is very thick on the ground and in this zone there is an average of nine settlements per parish and thirteen parishes make up the *municipio*. Around each of these settlements a tightly focused semi-autonomous surface of activity spaces has emerged and this is reflected in the regimentation of land-use around them (figure 4). Such factors as the scale of the new political surface, the region's tenuous urban structure and the fact that it was managed more like a colony than an integral part of Spain helps us

to understand why fusion failed to occur between socio-economic space and political space. The highly localized socio-economic organization of society in the region with its many traditional institutions geared to maintaining the system in equilibrium have also militated against a general acceptance of the functional attributes of political space in the region. The paper also identifies some of the tensions and their spatial consequences which have developed between the state and society in the region such as the deliberate firing of the woodlands, endowing the landscape with a palpable expression of this kind of conflict. The paper concludes by arguing that the lack of harmony between the social and economic organization of society and its political spatial structure constitutes a significant obstacle for the modernization of the region.